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3(2)

THE SELEUCID, PARTHIAN AND SASANIAN PERIODS

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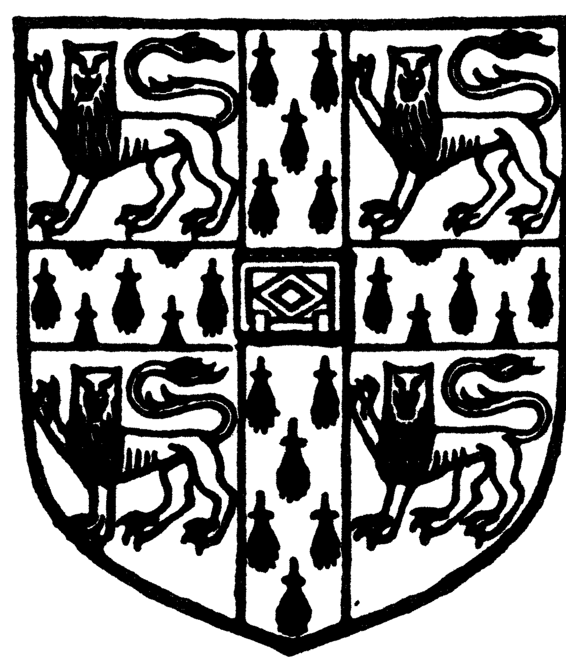
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THE SELEUCID, PARTHIAN AND SASANIAN PERIODS

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PART V

INSTITUTIONS

In spite of their importance to the historian, Iranian institutions in pre-Islamic times have been more difficult to grasp than the political history, mainly on account of the problems that the interpretation of the meagre available sources present. The subject, therefore, has been given particular attention.

Chapter 18 deals with the law, especially in Sasanian times, and with the picture gained from it of the social structure and organization of Parthian and Sasanian Iran. A discussion of the extended patriarchal family as the basic social unit, the agnatic groups and their prerogatives and obligations, the social estates, and the institution of slavery is followed by a careful exposition of the family law (marriage, guardianship, succession), property law (private and family property, endowments, inheritance) and the law of obligations. Chapter 19 takes up first the institution of kingship and the sources and limits of royal authority, the categories of the nobility, their social and political status and their titles, with particular attention to contemporary epigraphic, numismatic and iconographic evidence. It then moves to a discussion of the administration in the city-states, royal cities, provinces and districts; looks at state officials and their functions; and closes with a consideration of trade, taxes and monetary system.

Chapter 20 is concerned with the geographical and administrative divisions of the empire, patterns of settlement, urban centres, routes and travel, taking in its stride also a survey of the economy, produce and trade.

Time-reckoning was important not only for the regulation of religious observances and festivals, but also for the collection of taxes and the proper functioning of the administrative apparatus. Calendar reforms in Iran have entailed therefore far reaching consequences in the social and religious life, creating on the side thorny problems of chronology for future historians.

Chapter 21*a* examines calendar and chronology and Chapter 21*b* deals with the festivals, which constituted the highlights of religious observances, as well as Sasanian calendrical reforms and their consequences. Editor.

CHAPTER 18

IRANIAN SOCIETY AND LAW

I. SOURCES[1]

For the questions dealt with in this chapter the available sources are markedly uneven in quality: evidence for the Parthian period is extremely meagre and fragmentary when compared with the information provided by the written sources of the Sasanian period.

Historical records in the Iranian language for the Parthian period, if such ever existed, have not survived. Some information, very scanty and inadequate, can be gathered from the works of Greek and Roman writers who lived in that period, and also from later Syriac and especially Armenian texts which sometimes refer back to events of the Parthian period and preserve a number of social and legal terms. Of incomparably greater value is the Parthian epigraphic evidence, the three private-law documents of the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D. from Avroman (the earlier two are in Greek, the third in Middle Iranian), and some parchments from Dura-Europos which belong to the period of Parthian rule. During excavations of the Parthian fortress Mihrdātkart (at Nisā in modern Turkmenistān) Soviet archaeologists found about 3,000 potsherds inscribed in Parthian. The inscriptions cover the period from the end of the 2nd century B.C. to the middle of the 1st century A.D. They are mostly accounts, and the majority of them were found in the wine-storehouse where contributions in kind from neighbouring vineyards were assembled. Many of these documents have been published, but full publication is still in the preparatory stage.

No Iranian historical texts have survived from the Sasanian period;[2] *Kār-nāmak ī Artaxšēr ī Pāpakān* ("The Book of the acts of Ardashīr Pāpakān") must be classed as a literary document and was probably written when the Sasanian period was over. Western sources, though valuable for the political history of Iran, are almost valueless for the country's social history, which is what we are concerned with here. In this connection the Syriac texts and Armenian historical works con-

[1] In this chapter the author has employed an earlier, more archaic form of Middle Persian words and names than prevailed in late Sasanian times; thus *Mātakdān*, *Dēnkart*, *nāmak*, Artaxšēr, *rat*, rather than *Mātīgān*, *Dēnkard*, *nāmag*, Ardašīr, *rad*. Ed.

[2] That a Sasanian historical chronicle, *Xvatāy-nāmak*, did once exist is known to us through Arab writers (Ṭabarī, Tha'ālibī) who used it, or paraphrases of it. See pp. 359ff.

temporary with the Sasanians are considerably richer in content. The Armenian written tradition is of very great interest to the Iranist, owing to the close resemblance between Armenian and Iranian state and social organization and legal institutions and also because the Armenians borrowed social and legal terminology from Iran. The Sasanian period is much better represented than the Parthian in respect to epigraphic monuments, in particular by the great inscription (in Middle-Persian, Parthian and Greek) of Shāpūr I from Naqsh-i Rustam (Ka'ba-yi Zardusht), the inscriptions of the priest Kartīr, the inscription of King Narseh from Paikuli, and the inscription from Fīrūzābād of the *vazurg-framātar* of Iran, Mihr-Narseh, all of which contain valuable information on social and legal institutions. But the most important, the fundamental source of information about these institutions is, of course, the Sasanian Law-Book.

Law was not codified on an all-Iran scale in Sasanian times and this document is not actually a code but a collection of law-cases embracing all branches of private law. The title of the collection is "The book of a thousand judicial decisions" (*Mātakdān ī hazār dātastān*). It was intended for practical use in legal proceedings and was compiled in the reign of Khusrau II Aparvēz (Parvīz) by a man named Farraxvmart ī Vahrāmān, who lived in Fārs, in the town of Gōr (Fīrūzābād), in the district (*tasūk*) of Artaxšahr-Xvarreh (Ardashīr-Xurra). A brief survey of the materials used by the compiler of the Law-Book will give the reader a clearer idea of the nature of this monument, the richness of the information it contains and its value as an historical source.

Ancient Iranian law, like all ancient law, was sanctified by a religious ethic and constituted a part of this ethic. The canon of the Avesta included a number of legal nasks which have not survived but which are mentioned in the *Dēnkart*, the Pahlavī Zoroastrian "encyclopaedia" of the 9th century A.D. Book VIII of the *Dēnkart* contains epitomes of these nasks in the form of indexes or subject-lists.

In the Sasanian period, too, the legal nasks of the Avesta were used in legal proceedings, but not directly. The language barrier was not the only reason for this. The law of the Avestan nasks was certainly primitive in comparison with the level of development which had been reached by the society this law was serving. During the centuries that had elapsed since they were compiled (in approximately the 6th century B.C.) Iranian law had gone through a considerable evolution, along with Iranian society. And though the authority of the legal nasks was as

sacred as ever, they could not satisfy the requirements of the new conditions. It is clear that very early, long before the Sasanian period, the practice of making oral commentaries on these nasks had become widespread. It is not known when the first written commentaries appeared, but probably this also happened under the Arsacids. According to the Law-Book, written commentaries on the legal nasks of the Avesta provided the basis for legal proceedings as early as the middle of the Sasanian period. They were called *Čāštak* ("Precepts", "Teachings") and references to them, with mention of their authors, the commentators on the Avesta, together with actual quotations from them, are fairly frequent in the Law-Book. Some of the authors of commentaries on the non-legal nasks of the Avesta, such as Sōšyans, Martak, Mēṯō(k)māh and Aparak, also wrote legal commentaries, but a number of authors' names appear now for the first time. These legal commentaries were written at different times, the earliest of those used in the Law-Book dating probably from the end of the 3rd century or the beginning of the 4th. There were also law "schools" composed of followers (Aparakīkān, Mēṯō(k)māhīkān) of one or other of these commentators, the *dastabar*s. It was through these commentaries that certain legal terms from the Avesta found their way into Sasanian legal practice. Comparison of the articles quoting or expounding these commentaries and the 8th book of the Dēnkart shows that the 9th-century epitomes were made from the Pahlavī commentaries, and not directly from the Avestan nasks.

Besides these commentaries, the compiler of the Law-Book also refers to and quotes from "collections of judicial decisions", evidently put together for the special purpose of helping judges – in particular, the *Dātastān-nāmak*.

There are also direct indications of the activities of the high priests (*magupatān magupat*) in the field of legislation and judicial organization. Thus, in four articles of the Law-Book mention is made of the "Memorandum" (*aβyātkār*) of Veh-Shāpūr, the magupatān magupat. This is the same Veh-Shāpūr who under Khusrau I Anūshīrvān headed the commission on the canon of the Avesta. Veh-Shāpūr's "Memorandum" deals with procedural questions and, in particular, the drawing-up of records of interrogation during the investigation of capital offences. This document was written down from Veh-Shāpūr's dictation and reproduced in copies which, authenticated by his seal, were then circulated to the provinces.

Other sources used by the compiler were the "Book (or Instruction) regarding the duties of magupats" (*Xvēškārīh-nāmak ī magupatān*) and the "Book about the duties of officials" (*Xvēškārīh-nāmak ī kār-framānān*). The latter contained, notably, the instruction of the *rat* (spiritual master) Mahraspand (evidently the father of Āturpāt ī Mahraspandān, a figure in the Zoroastrian "church" well known for his fanaticism in the reign of Shāpūr II, 309–379) concerning the confiscation for the King's treasury of the property of Manichaeans and persons spreading their doctrine.

A special work or instruction on procedure for appeals was called *Mustaβar-nāmak*.

The Law-Book also cites decrees issued by certain Sasanian kings, with interesting details. For example, decrees by three kings, Bahrām V, Yazdgard II and Pērōz about the punishment of the *vazurg-framātar* of Iran, Mihr-Narseh, and the orders issued by the kings Kavād and Khusrau I about seals. Perhaps the most interesting of them, despite the fact that it is not completely clear, is the decree of Khusrau I on judicial reform and a general review of judicial procedures and sentences.

This does not, however, exhaust the range of sources utilized – and frequently quoted – in the Law-Book. The compiler had access to the archives of the tasūk of Artaxšahr-Xvarreh and also the court records of the town of Gōr. He quotes from entries in court records, from the minutes of interrogations, from a decision by the *rat*s and *kār-framān*s (officials) of Artaxšahr-Xvarreh.[1] Farraxvmart ī Vahrāmān also quotes the wills, to which he was given access in the archives, of Veh-Shāpūr, the magupatān magupat, and Dāt-Gušnasp, of the noble family of Šahr-Zapalakān (both of whom were contemporaries of Khusrau I), and other private documents.

The sketch of Iranian society and law offered in this chapter is based mainly on the Sasanian Law-Book. Although this document is by far the richest source of information on our subject, other sources help us to understand certain passages in the Law-Book, and sometimes provide additional information. Among these other sources, besides those already mentioned, are later Pahlavī documents, especially *Dātastān ī dēnīk* (9th century A.D.) and *Rivāyat ī Ēmēt i Ašavahištān* (10th century),

[1] The quotation from this decision gives us an idea of the opening formula used in documents of this kind: they begin by giving the date, in terms of the king's reign, and the *ōstikān*ship of such and such a person, and then comes the phrase – "it has been decided by the *rat*s and *kār-framān*s of Artaxšahr-Xvarreh".

and also a Pahlavī specimen of a marriage-contract which reproduces the pattern of Sasanian documents of this type. An important supplement to the Law-Book is provided by Book VIII of the *Dēnkart*, and also by a legal compilation made for the Christians in Sasanian Iran, the Law-Book of Yišōʿboxt, which has come down to us in a Syriac translation. In so far as the Christian communities of Iran were brought into contact with the Zoroastrian population through disputes involving the law of property and obligations, it was inevitable that they should adopt Iranian legal norms in this sphere. The same may be said of the Babylonian Talmud, a collection of law cases and norms compiled for use by the Jewish communities of the Sasanian realm.

Of the documents in Persian those most useful for our purposes are the "Letter of Tansar" and the "Persian Rivāyats".

2. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The structure of the society to be discussed in this chapter evolved through a process of social and property stratification which began under Achaemenians and even earlier. Although the centuries that elapsed between the foundation of the Parthian state and the downfall of the Sasanians saw some change and development, this factor will be disregarded here, since social (and legal) institutions are fairly conservative and slow to change, and also the present state of the sources does not enable us to trace the course of these changes and bring out their dynamic with any degree of precision.

The complexity and variety of the Iranian social scene at this time have long been a commonplace of historical writing. Besides the members of the king's family, the vassal rulers, courtiers and high officials of state, all of whom were persons of considerable wealth, there were the middle and petty service nobility (who received from the treasury, in payment for their service, both rations and allotments of land in hereditary conditional possession), a priesthood, urban middle strata made up of merchants and craftsmen, a mass of country people living in village communities, and also slaves. Finally, there was a quite numerous nomadic population, who still retained gentile-tribal forms of organization and a primitive patriarchal economy. Accordingly, Iranian society may be studied in a number of different aspects, of which four will be discussed in this chapter: (*a*) the division into social estates; (*b*) citizenship and lack of citizenship; (*c*) class and

legal status (non-slaves and slaves); (*d*) organizational structures (i.e. social units).

Social estates. There is no mention in sources of the Achaemenian and Parthian periods of the ancient division of society into estates of which we learn from the Avesta, and there is no evidence that such a division existed in the first half of the Sasanian period. That such a division existed in the subsequent period (from the 5th century on) we know from Pahlavī sources, from the works of Byzantine writers (Procopius of Caesarea) and Arab writers, and from Persian tradition.

It is equally difficult to assume either that the lack of evidence in the earlier sources (especially in the Greek sources) is merely accidental or that the well attested division of Iranian society into social estates in the later period was an entirely artificial creation of that period, with no real roots in the past. Evidently, with the appearance of a state in Iran and the emergence into the foreground of other forms of social organization, the rôle of this ancient division into estates markedly declined.

On the other hand, there can have been no special social-estate administration, nor did this exist in the society reflected in the Avesta. The estate-terms found in the Avesta left no trace in the living language of later times. The ancient estate of "priests" (Av. *āϑravan-*) apparently came very early to be denoted by the term "magian" (Iran. *magu-* > *moγ*), and the ancient estate of "warriors" or "charioteers" (Av. *raϑaēštar-*) was replaced by the new noble estate, *āzātān* (in Greek documents from Iran representatives of this estate were called ἐλεύθεροι, by association with the homonym *āzāt*, "free"). This estate might also include the "horsemen" (*asaβarān*) of non-noble origin who served in the regular cavalry and received from the treasury allotments of land in conditional possession. The development of urban life, the crafts and trade, and the appearance of a bureaucracy must have led to still greater changes affecting the third estate, (*ram*, "flock"), the ancient "cultivators" (Av. *vāstryō.fšuyant-*).

Meanwhile, as early as the end of the 3rd century A.D., the process had begun of transforming the Zoroastrian priesthood into a state "church", which from the reign of Shāpūr II onward began to play an ever greater rôle. The strengthening of its economic power and internal organization, which proceeded in close alliance with the monarchy, was accompanied, of course, by a tremendous growth in its

ideological influence. The prestige of the Avesta became especially great. For this reason, when a new division into estates was introduced, not later than the beginning of the 5th century A.D. (this reform was a purely bureaucratic one), on the one hand the real situation was taken into account, on the other, the nomenclature of the Avesta was revived (in the Pahlavī "learned" version).

The reform established four main estates (*pēšak*). First, as before, came the "priests" (*āsrōn*, *'srwn*, Pahl. transcription of Av. *āϑravan-*), with which the "judges" (*dātaβarān*) were also associated. In the second place stood the estate of "warriors" (*artēštarān*, transcription of Av. *raϑaēštar-*). The third place was assigned to a new estate, the "scribes" (*dipīrān*), comprising the numerous members of the bureaucracy. The "cultivators" (*vāstryōšān*, transcription of Av. *vāstryō.fšuyant-*) formed the fourth estate, along with the "craftsmen" (*hutuxšān*, literally "diligent", "zealous", an artificial term, perhaps an adaptation of the phonetically similar Av. *hūiti-*).

Subdivisions were also introduced within the estates. The fourth estate included "cultivators", "craftsmen" and "merchants", while the first was apparently subdivided into "magians" ("magupats"), *ēhrpats* (< Av. *aēϑrapati-*) and "judges". Membership of a particular estate was hereditary and movement from one to another was extremely difficult. Each estate was also given a bureaucratic administration covering the whole empire, and the person appointed to be head of an estate did not need to belong to that particular estate. Thus, of the three sons of the "prime minister" of Iran, Mihr-Narseh (5th century), one, Zurvandāt, was *ēhrpatān-ēhrpat*, head of the ēhrpats, while the second, Māh-Gušnasp was head of the "cultivators" (*vāstryōšānsālār*) and the third, Kardār, headed the estate of "warriors" (*artēštarānsālār*).

But this reform, which sought in a bureaucratic way to enhance the significance in Iran of the division into estates, did not dislodge the stress laid on the social antithesis between those who had rights of citizenship and the rest, and, among the citizens, between the "nobility", who held a privileged position in the field of public law, and the rest, and finally, between all these social groups and the slaves, who had no civic rights.

Civic status. Only a member of a civic community (of whatever estate) was a legal person in the full sense. The position of a freeborn man who was outside a community was similar to that of a pariah;

the advantages enjoyed by a member of a civic community were closed to him. Every member of a community could not only inherit within his community but also acquire real property and make use of whatever belonged to the community as a whole. A system of mutual responsibility and solidarity also operated within the community. Membership of a community conferred the right to take part in social life and religious worship, guaranteed security of succession and ensured the protection of widows and orphaned minors. In other words, the status of a citizen enabled a man to take full and active part in economic, social and religious life and offered him and his family definite safeguards.

As will be shown later in the section on "agnatic groups", the road to citizenship was opened by entry into one of the structures which made up the community. The whole of the subsequent exposition in this chapter is aimed at giving an idea of the forms in which civic rights existed in Iran and the standards which guided social practice.

For the present, in connection with legal personality, it should be noted that the scope of a person's legal capacity and competence varied with sex and age: women and minors had a limited (passive) legal capacity. Greater or lesser loss of rights, even complete loss, could result from conviction for crime.

A Zoroastrian who adopted another religion was deprived of his position in his former family and community and, consequently, of all the rights linked with that position, but he kept his rights as regards contractual obligations and his personal property. When he entered another, non-Zoroastrian, community he did not cease thereby to be a civic person.

In Middle-Persian documents we find used to define a person's membership of a civic community, in addition to the expressions āzāt and *hamnāf* (literally, "agnate"), also the expressions *ādēhīk* (literally, "fellow-countryman"; cf. Av. *ādahyav-*) and *mart ī šahr* ("citizen").

Non-citizens. Slaves. The inhabitants of Iran who were without civic rights included other groups besides the slaves. These were persons who, though formally free, were not members of civic communities, "aliens", casual settlers, or persons who had been expelled from a community, and their descendants (Middle Persian *uzdēh*, *uzdēhīk*). Also in this category were the illegitimate children of full-right members of the community and, apparently, their descendants, who lived in the

family as semi-dependent persons with restricted rights. As a rule, freed slaves were also included in this category.

Though the number of freemen who were not members of any community was great, the difference in social and legal status between slaves and *all* non-slaves was so sharp that it is these two categories that predominate in Iranian private law, references to the legal position of the "intermediate" groups occurring only rarely.

We have evidence from classical sources about the slaves in Parthian Iran. For example, in a letter to Atticus, Cicero mentions a runaway slave who said he had worked in the mines of the Parthian King; in proof of his story the slave showed a mark branded on his body. Slave labour was used not only in the royal mines but also, on an especially large scale, in agriculture, building and in the crafts. Diodorus Siculus says[1] that Himerus (Euhemerus), vice-gerent of Phraates (Frahāt) II in Babylonia, enslaved a large number of Babylonians and sent them to Media to be sold there as booty. There must have been a demand for slaves in that province, or else Himerus would not have found buyers. According to Plutarch[2] there were many slaves in the army of the Parthian general Suren. Since slaves were a form of wealth (and a productive one), rich men became owners of a large number of slaves. The Sasanian vizier Mihr-Narseh was surnamed "Hazārbandak", that is, "owner of a thousand slaves". Temples were also slaveowners; this is definitely attested for Zoroastrian temples in the Sasanian period (see below).

Despite the extensive use of slave labour in Iran, the economy was mainly sustained by the work of the free population. Nevertheless, the existence of slavery must not be underestimated as a factor in economic and, especially, in social life; it found reflection both in law and in people's social psychology. For this reason the Iranian evidence regarding this institution will be given in more detail.

Middle-Persian documents provide us with a whole series of expressions designating slaves; *bandak* (literally, "bound"), *anšahrīk* (literally "outlander"), *rahīk* (literally, "bound"), *tan* (literally, "body"; cf. Greek σῶμα), *vēšak* (literally, "belonging to a *vis*, i.e. a *gens*"; cf. Khotan Saka *bisa*, "slaves"), and others. The most commonly used of these are bandak and anšahrīk.[3]

[1] xxxiv/xxxv. 21.

[2] *Lives*, "Crassus", xxi. 7.

[3] The first of these terms is used in documents also in the sense "subject of the sovereign" (*šāhān šāh bandak*, *i.e.*, "subject of the King of Kings"). An analogous case occurs in the definition of *manā ba^{n}daka^{h}* in Darius's inscription at Bihistun.

The chief and most characteristic feature of a slave in Iranian law is that a slave was a "thing" (*xvāstak*), a saleable article.[1] Like any other thing, he was an object of real right (*ius in re*) on the part of a private individual, the king or a temple, and could be the object of transactions – buying and selling, gifts, leases. He could serve as security for a mortgage or an antichresis either along with a plot of land or on his own. A slave employed in agriculture and living on a plot of land (*dastkart*) that belonged to his master constituted, together with the draught animals, the livestock of this dastkart and could be alienated along with it. The foetus of a pregnant slave-woman was regarded as part of the "thing", i.e. the slave mother, and therefore was subject not only to the right and authority of the slave-woman's owner but also to whatever disposition of the slave-woman might be made by the owner. It was in the power of the owner not merely to sell or transfer full ownership of a slave to another man but also to sell or transfer half-ownership or other part-ownership (as with part of a thing). The slave then became the joint property of two or more persons, each of whom owned and disposed of him in accordance with his "ideal part" (theoretical share) in this joint property. In practice such a slave was owned and used by his masters turn and turn about, depending on the share owned by each and the terms of the deed of purchase. Children born to such slaves inherited their status. A slaveowner could also sell or transfer separately the income from his slave. Finally, the law allowed the slave owner to recover by legal process, through a civil suit, a slave who had run away or been abducted by a third party.

Thus from the standpoint of Iranian law slaves belonged to the category of things. This definition, however, would be one-sided if left at that. Here we come upon an internal contradiction which runs through the legal thinking of all the societies of antiquity and appears in their juridical standards, and which is reflected in the norms of Iranian law. Though the slave was regarded as a thing and dealt with as such, the human nature of this "thing" could not easily be ignored. The religious law of several ancient peoples regarded the slave as to some extent a person. The slave's human faculties, his possession of reason, speech and capacity for purposeful activity, greatly extended his potential usefulness to his owner as compared with other "things",

[1] The value of a slave depended on age, sex and skill, and also on the state of the market (*arž i šahr*). The average price of an adult male slave in the late Sasanian period is given in the Law-Book as 500 drachms (but this figure may, of course, have been distorted by copyists).

since this "thing" might be exploited in a wide variety of ways. Many tasks could be entrusted to a slave, especially if he was trained, and these were not confined to the household: he could be assigned business commissions to perform in the outside world. Clearly, the slave's complete lack of legal capacity and competence restricted the sphere in which slave labour could be used. The economic development of Iran, the increasing complexity of production and commerce, opened up ever new possibilities for the exploitation of slaves and stimulated the recognition of some legal standing for slaves. While continuing to be an object of right, the slave becomes, though only to a limited extent, a subject of right as well. The legal capacity of a slave was not only limited (even in the best of cases it did not exceed that of a subordinate person – a woman, a ward), it was in general not something constant, ascribed to the slave from birth and handed down from father to son; the slave's owner assigned him this or that right, and what rights he had, and within what limits, depended on his owner's will, as did also the duration of these rights. For example, some articles in the Sasanian Law-Book show that a slaveowner could transfer a thing to his slave, and could enable him to receive a gift from a third party; in other words, he could assign to his slave a capacity for acquisition. Even in cases like this, however, when a slave appears as the possessor (or even owner) of a thing, it is a matter of a privilege granted to the slave by his master. Should some third party give a thing to a slave, this gift becomes the slave's only if his owner refrains from declaring that *he* takes possession of it, that is, renounces his legal right to the ownership of the thing. Even over something that belongs to the slave, however, the slave-owner retains a latent right, and when the slave dies his owner, and not the slave's child, inherits the thing. No indication is to be found in the Law-book, direct or indirect, that a slave could alienate property or undertake obligations in his own right, which is perfectly natural, since slaves had no active legal capacity in relation to property, any more than free dependants (*personae alieni iuris*) had.

Another sphere in which some elements of legal personality for slaves are found is that of legal capacity in relation to delictual and procedural matters. A slave could take part in litigation, even as one of the parties; not, however, in all types of litigation, but only in certain types of civil suit, in particular in those involving disputes over property. Even in these cases the Sasanian Law-Book provides examples which excellently illustrate the dual nature of the slave's position. Thus,

in one of the articles,[1] the plaintiff demands the return of a slave who has either fled on his own initiative to another master or has been appropriated by the latter, illegally from the standpoint of the plaintiff (a case of revindication). The respondent in the case is the slave himself, though he has no free status *de facto*: his claim is not that the plaintiff has manumitted him, but that he belongs to the other man. By standards of Western law it would have been more natural for the plaintiff to have brought action for the return of a thing, his property, against the one who now holds it, and not against the thing itself, i.e. the slave, so that the case would proceed entirely within the channel of revindications of real rights (= rights in the thing) with the disputed slave remaining in the category of things. As it is, in this Sasanian law-case the slave appears in two aspects at once: the plaintiff sues for recovery of the slave as a thing belonging to him but addresses his suit to the thing itself, to the slave as a subject and as a party to the suit; moreover, since his present master is not drawn into the case, the slave appears as a legal person, while at the same time declaring himself to be the property of a third party, that is, declaring himself to be, not a subject, but an object, i.e. a thing.

A slave could even sue his own master for cruel treatment, appearing in court as plaintiff; in one case a slave had allegedly been thrown by his master into the Tigris.[2] A slave-owner was obliged to compensate a slave for a mutilation inflicted on him. A slave could appear as witness in a judicial investigation of any kind – not, however, on his own, but only along with a citizen possessed of full rights: only then was the slave's evidence entered in the report of the examination (the same rule applied to subordinate persons, such as women). A slave had no right to swear an oath.

A slave was not recognized by law as having a family. Even if the slave lived with "his" family, the different members of it might belong to different owners and at any moment be separated for ever. But a Zoroastrian slave was officially recognized as having the right to practise his religion, and in order to ensure that it would be actually possible for him to do this, it was forbidden, at any rate in the later Sasanian period, to sell such a slave to an infidel. A slave who embraced Zoroastrianism could leave an infidel master and become the slave of a new, Zoroastrian master; his previous owner had no right, when this happened, to demand the return of the slave to him, he could only

[1] *Mātakdān* 107.9–12.

[2] *Mātakdān* A 13.11–13.

claim compensation for the value of the slave from the latter's new owner.

In this way Iranian written records depict the dual nature of the slave in relation to the law. On the one hand the slave is an object of right, a thing. This is his permanent and constant feature, his primary nature, beside which appears his second nature, the presence in him of elements of legal personality, of a subject. The slave's second nature is subordinate to his first. His rights as a subject are not governed by rules: with few exceptions (religious law and some elements of delictual and procedural legal capacity) they are determined by his master's will, and even in the best case, do not go beyond the rights of subordinate persons (women and minors). In this respect the institution of slavery in Iran did not differ substantially from slavery in other countries of Antiquity (though there might be differences in the scale on which slavery had developed, and also in certain minor details). The Roman jurists, who liked precise formulations, defined the relationship between master and slave in two expressions, *dominium* (meaning power over a thing) and *potestas* (meaning the authority of the head of a household over the unemancipated members of his family). The Sasanian jurists took the same line (though Iranian law was quite independent of Roman law), using two expressions to define this relationship, namely, *xvēšīh* ("lawful ownership of a thing", "real right") and *patixšāyīh* ("authority", in particular the patriarchal authority of the head of a household, *manus*).

Escape from the condition of slavery was effected through manumission, a legal act whereby a slave received his freedom from his master. This took place at the will of the master: in only one circumstance was the slave allowed the right to buy his freedom on his own initiative, namely, if the slave embraced Zoroastrianism and his master was a non-Zoroastrian. The freedman was given a certificate of manumission, *āzāt-nāmak*. Manumission was absolute. The slave became a free man under the protection of the law, as a "subject of the King of Kings", he could never be returned to slavery. Free status extended to the slave's offspring born after his release from slavery.

Iranian manumissions were of two kinds: (*a*) manumissions resulting in complete liberation of the slave; (*b*) manumissions involving partial liberation, when the slave was given only an "ideal part" (theoretical fraction) of his freedom – one-half, one-third, one-quarter, one-tenth. Partial manumissions were unknown to Greek and Roman law, but

are found in the local law of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, and were also practised in the Christian and Jewish communities of the Sasanian Empire (the "Law-Book" of Yišō'boxt and the Babylonian Talmud). They took place under two conditions: when the master to whom a slave wholly belonged manumitted him to a limited extent, and when a slave who was jointly owned by two or more persons received his freedom from one of them.

There are no signs that in Iran the manumitting master exercised patronage over his freedman. There are grounds, however, for supposing that a freedman who was a Zoroastrian entered the system of agnatic kinship of his manumittor. At all events, if a freedman died without offspring born after his liberation, the agnatic group of his former master was obliged to establish a *stūrīh* for him (see section 3, under the heading "Succession"); the order of relationship was reckoned from the manumittor and one of the latter's successors was designated as the freedman's *stūr*.

Hierodouloi (*sacred slaves*). The Zoroastrian temples owned slaves whose labour was used on the temple estates. There were, however, also "slaves of the temple" (*ātaxš bandak*, *āturān bandak*), who are distinguished in the "Law-Book" from the slaves who worked on the temple estates. These "slaves of the temple", or *hierodouloi* "belonged" to the temple in that they were dedicated to it, but they did not constitute a special social category, and were not slaves in any real sense. Their connection with the temple was religious.

Both men and women could become hierodouloi, as a result of honorary dedication. In the Law-Book sacred slavery is defined as a condition of complete civic freedom, "freedom before men", but "slavery" before "the Fire", that is, the fire-temple. Among the hierodouloi there were persons of most noble origin, for example, Mihr-Narseh, a representative of the noble family of the Mihranids. King Bahrām V (421–439) handed over Mihr-Narseh "as a slave" to the fire-temple of Artvahišt and that of Afzōn-Artāšir (the royal fire-temple) and for several years he was a sacred slave of these temples. Later, as a result of some offence committed by Mihr-Narseh, the nature of which is not specified, Yazdgard II (439–457) ordered that he be transferred to the royal estates (*ōstān*), to work there as a punishment, a sentence which he served for several years. Then, by a third king, Pērōz (459–484), with the agreement of the magupatān magupat

Martbūt and others who "were there" (presumably, in the king's council), he was again transferred to temple "slavery"[1] – not, however, to the temples where he had "served" before but to another one, the fire-temple of Ohrmizd-Pērōz (also one of the royal temples), in strict accordance with the general rule by which a "temple-slave" who had committed an offence and had served his sentence on the royal estates must be transferred to another temple.[2] Both in the temples and on the ōstān Mihr-Narseh was accompanied by his wife (presumably his chief wife) and a slave. We know, too, that in the temples Mihr-Narseh was an *āturvaxš*, a minister of the cult, whose task it was to ensure that the fire did not go out, while his wife was a sacred slave, a hierodoule (*paristār*) and the slave was a slave, that is, he waited on them. It may be supposed that temple-slaves of noble origin performed some kind of liturgy for the temple, as well as taking part in worship, but we have no evidence of this.

The temples gave protection to their hierodouloi. For instance the famous fire-temple of Farnbāγ ransomed "from the enemy", out of its own funds, certain of its hierodouloi who had apparently been taken prisoner while on active military service.[3]

Agnatic groups. So far we have been looking at Iranian society from the standpoint of its stratification into estates and classes. Now we must examine the structures which were fundamental to the organization of the whole civic population of Iran.

From very early times, well before the Parthian and Sasanian periods, the primary unit of Iranian society was the family, both the small (individual) family and the extended family (the patriarchal family of undivided brothers). Both were designated by the terms *dūtak* (literally "smoke") and *katak* ("house"); the latter appears in the compound words *katak-xvatāy*, "head of the family, paterfamilias", and *katak-bānūk*, "mistress of the house, materfamilias". The Iranian family consisted of a group of agnates limited to three or four generations, counting in descending order from the head of the family, who were bound together by a strict system of rights and obligations. Besides the bond of kinship, the members of the family were linked together by shared worship (in particular by the domestic altar and the cult of the souls of ancestors on the father's side) and religious rights, joint family

[1] *Mātakdān* A 39.11–17; 40.3–6. [2] *Ibid.* 39.8–11.
[3] *Mātakdān* 103.9–10.

property (in a large family, the undivided brothers had only theoretical "shares" – ideal parts – and were from the legal standpoint partners, *brāt-hambāγ*), and by common activity in production and consumption. The members of the family possessed unequal degrees of legal capacity and were linked together by relations of authority and subordination (on the one hand, *personae sui juris*, i.e. the head of the family and his grown-up sons and grandsons, and on the other the subordinate persons, the women and minors).

Besides the family there was a wider community of kinsmen, the agnatic group, to which the family belonged as one of its constituent units. The agnatic group, being the typical form of organization in ancient society, was the most important structure within the civic community, replacing the earlier clan and tribal system. The same form of organization is seen in the Greek γένος, πάτρα, συγγένεια, the Roman *gens*, *familia* (in the broad sense of this term, which in its narrow sense meant the family), *stirps*, and it also underlay the ancient Indian *gotra* (= *laukika gotra*). In Parthian and Sasanian Iran the agnatic group appears under the names of *nāf*, *tōxm*, *gōhr*.

In its simplest form the agnatic group included several dozen patriarchal families who all originated from one common ancestor on the father's side, three or more generations back from the living heads of these families. The members of such a community of agnates were connected by kinship, the order of which was established quite precisely since every surviving head of a family could have known as a child and a young man not only his own father, grandfather and great-grandfather but also their brothers and consequently all the lines of descent from them. Memory of kinship in the line of ascent might, of course, embrace an even larger number of generations.

Besides kinship, the members of the agnatic group were united by their common cult of the spirits of their dead ancestors (in the male line) and the "founder" of the group, and also by common religious ceremonies and festivals. Information on this subject is to be found in the Avesta, but evidence from the Sasanian epoch is no less eloquent. For example King Shāpūr I set up a special fund for the "souls and names" of his three ancestors – Ardashīr, Pāpak and Sāsān – and other kinsmen, so that services might be held, with offering of sacrifices and invocation of names, as we read in the great inscription by this king at the Kaʿba-yi Zardušt.

The following were also important features of the agnatic group:

(1) community of economic life, (2) solidarity in obligations, (3) community of political life, (4) territorial community.

Originally, real property, cattle, tools of production and economic implements in general were collectively owned by the agnatic group, and the families constituting this group were merely co-possessors of these things. This situation underwent a sharp change with the growth in the importance of the family as a social unit. But although the possessions apportioned out to a family eventually became that family's property, the agnatic group continued to retain latent rights over the possessions of all the families forming part of the group. The larger group also retained collective ownership of the common pastures, mills, irrigation works, farm buildings and so on, to which every family had access on the basis of co-partnership or common easement and by right of its membership in the agnatic group. Alienation of real property was allowed only within the group (i.e. to an agnate), the agreement of the agnates being required for its alienation outside the group. Community of economic life and community of worship were very closely bound up with solidarity in obligations. A man's agnatic status (his relative position in the kinship scale of his agnatic group) determined his degree of responsibility for the fulfilment of obligations undertaken by members of the group; it also determined the order of his responsibility of assuming guardianship over women and orphans and subsidiary or substitute successorship (*stūrīh*) to an agnate who died without leaving an heir within the family. As will be seen later, membership of the group and order of kinship might oblige a man (i.e. if it was his turn) to enter into levirate marriage or marriage with an epikleros, and the same factor also affected adoption.

By tradition, to which the Avesta already bears witness, males became adult at the age of fifteen. At fifteen a youth was dedicated to the cult, and this event was accompanied by his investiture with the sacred girdle and shirt. This solemn ceremony took place in the presence of all the agnates and marked the beginning of a new period in his life. He was regarded as having been "born again"[1] and this was indeed his "civic birth", which made him a person of full legal capacity (*tuvānīk*) with the right to participate in the civic (and religious) life of the community. Weddings and juridical acts were performed

[1] Among the Parsees this ceremony is called *naojot*, which comes from Pers. **nauzāδ* (from Iranian *navazāta – "born anew" or "new birth"). Cf. Old Ind. *dvija*, *dvijāti*, "second birth", "twice-born", the title accorded to members of the three primary estates.

before an assembly of the adult members of the agnatic group, which also regulated disputes and decided questions of common interest. The heads of families formed the council of the group, which also had its own head (Iran. *nāfapati-*: Arm. *nahapet*). The usual way in which persons from outside the group were received into it was by adrogation. Every agnatic group also constituted a territorial unit; although in Old and Middle Iranian documents there is no direct evidence for this view, it is strongly supported by comparison with other regions of the ancient world, as well as by present-day ethnographic material from Iran itself.

The limits of the agnatic circles which formed a social unit might vary. The nucleus of the agnatic community, its basic structure, consisted of the families whose heads had at least one common ancestor on the father's side, namely, a dead father, grandfather or great-grandfather. The members of families related in this way were near agnates to each other, and this circle corresponded to the Indian *sapiṇḍa* circle, the Greek ἀγχιστεία, and the Roman *agnatio* or *propinquitas*; the persons who belonged to it in Iran were called *hamnāfān*, *xvēšāvandān*, *āzātān* (in the Avesta: *xvaētav-*, *nabānazdišta-*). Though in India the *sapiṇḍa-* circle was exogamous, over a considerable area of ancient Iran it was endogamous. The principle of endogamy within the group – it was known by the Avestan word *xvaētvadaθa-* (literally "marriage between agnates") – found its extreme expression in incestuous marriages, which were given the highest religious sanction. Classical writers tell us of the widespread practice of this custom in Iran in Achaemenian times and later. A date formula in the first Avroman parchment mentions the marriage of the Parthian king with two of his compaternal sisters. This practice is especially well documented in texts of the Sasanian period, particularly in the Law-Book, where it appears as a standard custom. Examples of such marriages within the royal family are found in the great inscription of Shāpūr, which mentions Queen Dēnak, sister and wife of Ardashīr I, Queen Ātur-Anāhīt, daughter and wife of Shāpūr I, and others.

The wider agnatic group embraced several nuclei or segments with similar structure, and a constant process of segmentation led to the formation of new groups. Organization by agnatic groups was characteristic of all the civic estates. Membership of a community – urban or rural – was determined by one's membership of one of the agnatic groups which composed it, and a man's entry into a group, his status as an agnate, signified his possession of legal capacity as a citizen. For

this reason in Pahlavī legal terminology the word *āzāt*, which corresponds completely to the Latin *agnatus*, acquired the meaning of "a person of full legal capacity". But the nobility held a special position among the estates of Iran: together with civic legal capacity they also had privileges in the field of public (administrative) law. A man's entry into one of the agnatic groups of the noble estate meant, *ipso facto*, that he belonged to this privileged estate. In documents relating to the sphere of administrative-public law the word āzāt is therefore used in the sense of "member of an agnatic group of the nobility", "representative of the noble estate, nobleman". This use of the word was widespread.

It was status as an agnate in one of the noble groups that alone gave access to appointment to any state or court office of importance. Certain offices even became, with the passing of time, hereditary in a particular group, and that branch of the clan which had acquired preferential right to hold a given office could take the title of this office as the basis of its gentilitial name. Shāpūr's inscription, for instance, mentions such *nomina gentilicia* as *Bytḥškn* (*Bitaxšakān*), *Dyzptkn* (*Dizpatakān*), *Sp'ḥpt* (*Spāhpat*), derived from the offices of *bitaxš*, *dizpat*, *spāhpat*. In general, the agnatic groups of the nobility played a large part in the life of the monarchical state and had their independent representation in the court protocol. The latter was embodied in special charters of ranks (*Gāhnāmak*), which were examined afresh and confirmed by each successor to the throne. The statute of ranks was based on two principles: first, that of "officiality" (*kārdārīh*), that is, the status of each office, and second, that of status of "nobility", in accordance with the ordinal position held by each agnatic group. Thus the position occupied by any person at the court, his rank there, was determined by the relative position indicated in the charter of rank either for his office (if he was an official) or for his agnatic group, his clan. The lists of officials and nobles given in the great inscription of Shāpūr, for whose "souls and commemoration" the king directed that services be held, were drawn up on the basis of official charters of rank of this kind, for Shāpūr's own court and for those of his predecessor Ardashīr I, and of Pāpak, the sub-king of Persis, and reflect these principles.[1]

All the agnatic groups of the nobility were represented in the charter

[1] We have the text of a charter of ranks (Arm. *Gahnamak*) of the Armenian court in the 5th century. A copy of such a charter, sealed with the seal of the Sasanian king, was kept in the king's chancellery at Ctesiphon. The text of the Armenian charter of ranks illustrates the same principle (precedence in dignity or in nobility).

of ranks and so, presumably, at the king's court. As a rule these groups were represented at court by their heads, who were called "*vazurgs*" (*nazrakān*), in contrast to the ordinary members of these groups, who were called āzāts.

The Sasanian Law-Book distinguishes strictly between the rights and obligations governed by membership of a family, that is, resulting from direct line of descent or from being a brother-partner (in a family of undivided brothers), and those which were founded on membership of a particular agnatic group and kinship-order within this organization. In the first case, when the basis of accession is (agnatic) kinship by direct or collateral (brother-partner) line, that is, membership of a family, this basis is rendered by the technical term *būtak* (literally, "real", "natural"), *būtakīh*. In the second case, when the basis of accession is membership of an agnatic group and relative position within this group, it is said to be settled by place in the agnatic line, via agnatic kinship (*nabānazdištīh*). The difference between these two consisted not only in their relative order (the second line of calling came into action only where the first was lacking) and their form but also, to a certain extent, in their effect: the first or "natural" accession applied *ipso jure* whereas accession by agnatic line took place by appointing the nearest agnate in the legal order and consequently entailed formal procedures of request, acceptance, etc. The procedure of appointment was carried out at a gathering of all the adult members (those of full legal capacity) of the agnatic group.

3. FAMILY LAW

Marriage. Before the reception of Islam, Iranian society knew several types of lawful marriage, a diversity that was closely connected with the system of succession. The fundamental type of marriage, which was most "complete" legally and socially, was the *pātixšāyīh* marriage. It assumed entry by the wife into the husband's agnatic group and her passing under the guardianship of her husband (also, if he was alive, of her father-in-law), with the loss of her position in her previous family and complete release from the authority of her father or guardian: that is, it was a type of marriage *cum manu mariti*. Children born of a marriage of this type were regarded as legitimate, in possession of full rights, and as the successors of their father (i.e. their mother's husband) in all lines of succession: name (*nāmburtārīh*), worship, inheritance of

property, inheritance of obligations, and also social position (in the agnatic group, the community, the social estate). In the Sasanian period, at least, the recording in writing of marriage contracts of this kind was a widespread practice. A model for such a document is found in a Pahlavī specimen marriage contract which has come down to us also in a Sogdian marriage contract from Mt Mugh (A.D. 710). Drawn up in the form of a bilateral agreement between the bridegroom and the father (or guardian) of the bride, who acted as her representative, this marriage contract contained a number of points. After the declaration by the bride's father or guardian, handing her over to the groom, and the latter's declaration accepting her, there followed a statement of the obligations undertaken by the bridegroom and on behalf of the bride by her father or guardian. Besides binding himself to treat his wife in accordance with her rank as mistress of the house, provide her with food and clothing, and recognize her children as his legitimate offspring and successors, the groom undertook to pay, in the event of his divorcing her, a fixed, guaranteed sum (*kāpēn*) of 3,000 drachms in silver. Payment of this sum was secured by the bridegroom on an equivalent amount of all his property, present and future.

The marriage was concluded at a meeting of agnates. A man could marry only when he had come of age (at fifteen) and undergone the ceremony of religious confirmation; possession of full legal capacity was a necessary condition for concluding a marriage contract. A woman could marry even though still a minor, but the law forbade giving her in marriage against her will. I have already had occasion to mention the widespread occurrence of marriage between agnates, including very close relatives. It was possible for a man to enter into full-right marriage with several women at the same time.

While a marriage lasted the wife was under the patriarchal (tutorial) and conjugal authority of her husband and was obliged to obey him: her status was described in legal documents as *framān-burtārīh*. Any infringement of this status (*atarsǎkāyīh*) by the wife was considered an offence, which entitled the husband to invoke a number of rights, including dissolution of the marriage, regardless of whether she agreed to this or not. The limits of a woman's legal capacity, as a person in wardship, depended on the will of her husband. He had a general right to all property acquired by his wife during their marriage, unless, of course, the wife possessed special rights arising from contractual agreements binding on her husband, such as, e.g., contracts of

partnership, transfer, etc. For this reason, when, for instance, a third party wished to convey something to a woman, a declaration from her husband was needed ("I do not want this"), renouncing his rights to take the thing in question for himself; or else, what had the same significance, a declaration by him that he agreed to his wife's acquiring the article. If the husband pronounced the formula "I want it", then the thing conveyed to his wife became his and not hers. For the same reason, all transfers by the husband to his wife and all contracts relating to real rights (= *iura in re*) concluded between them were annulled in the event of divorce (or offence by the wife) and the property was returned to the husband.

However, the law protected the property rights of a woman from arbitrary encroachment upon them by her husband, provided that these rights had been set down in legal form. The offence of "disobedience", on grounds of which a wife's property rights might be infringed, had to be formally proved and confirmed (the court issued a "certificate of disobedience", *dip ī pat atarsăkāyīh*) and the wife had the right to approach the court independently in order to prove her innocence. The share of her father's property that a bride had received (her "daughter's share") and which she had brought as her dowry to her husband's home belonged to her as long as she lived, her husband being merely the usufructuary, and if she died childless, the dowry went back to her father's family.

Dissolution of such a marriage could take place on the initiative of either party, but ordinarily both had to agree to it; the wife's agreement was not required if she was childless or guilty of a misdemeanour. Dissolution might even be compulsory if the woman was called to succeed to a third party, one of her relatives (father, brother, grandfather, cousin, etc.); in that case it was also possible to transform the pātixšāyīh marriage into a different type of marriage, *sine manu mariti*. Like the marriage ceremony itself, the dissolution of a marriage was made public and official by the issue of a certificate of divorce (*hilišn-nāmak*), one of the main points in which was the transfer of guardianship over the woman. Usually when divorce occurred the woman took away with her, besides her dowry, her personal possessions and her kāpēn (*donatio propter nuptias*). After a husband's death, his widow by pātixšāyīh marriage had a right to a share (equal to a "son's" share, i.e., a full share) of his estate. Guardianship over her and other subordinate members of the family passed to an adult son (usually the

eldest) or, where there was no adult son, to the nearest agnate of the deceased husband.

If a man died childless, his widow (if she was capable of bearing children) had to enter into levirate marriage with his nearest agnate. This type of marriage was called by the Iranians *čakar*, *čakarīh* (cf. Ancient Indian *niyoga*). A widow who entered into this form of marriage continued to be the wife "with full rights" of her late husband and inherited a share in his property, while any children given her by her čakar-husband were regarded as the legitimate children and successors (and heirs) of her late husband, and not of their natural father.

When a man died without leaving a male successor or a widow capable of child-bearing, but left daughters (or sisters), it was necessary to call one of his daughters (usually the eldest, or an unmarried one) to be his successor; if there were no daughters, an unmarried sister was called. The daughter or sister thus called had no right to enter into pātixšāyīh marriage: she was obliged to enter into marriage *sine manu mariti* (like the čakarīh marriage described above) with an agnate of her father, and her position in the family and the agnatic group remained unaltered. This institution is fully comparable with the Greek epiclerate and the Ancient Indian *putrikā*, and children born of such a marriage to the epikleros-daughter were regarded as the legitimate children and successors of their maternal grandfather. If a daughter had already entered into full marriage when the situation arose that led to her being called to succeed her father, her full marriage was dissolved and replaced by another, *sine manu*, under which her husband was usually an agnate (preferably a close one) of her father, and he took on the rôle of her guardian until the maturity of any son born of this marriage, after which she passed into the guardianship of this son. The son of an epikleros who had become his mother's guardian could give her in marriage *cum manu mariti* to his own (natural) father. If the epikleros had no son, her father's epiclerate passed to her daughter, and the latter's son was regarded as the son and successor of his maternal great-grandfather. The čakarīh (levirate) marriage and the marriage of an epikleros-daughter were variants of the Iranian *stūr*-marriage described later on in connection with the Iranian system of succession.

The Iranians also knew other forms of marriage. For instance there was marriage concluded by the bride's own choice and without formal transfer of her by her kinsfolk, which corresponded to the Ancient

Indian marriage called *svayaṃvara*. Of great interest for its archaic character is marriage "for a definite period". The authority possessed by the head of a family and a husband gave him the right to hand over his wife – by a formal procedure and in response to a formal request – to another man belonging to his community, as a temporary wife for a definite period which was stipulated in a declaration. During her temporary marriage the woman continued to be under the guardianship of the man who had handed her over and to be his wife with full rights, and any children born of the temporary marriage belonged to him. For the period of this marriage the woman took away with her her personal possessions and income, which her temporary husband could use. When the agreed period came to its end she went back to her "permanent" husband. A father had a similar right to bestow his epikleros-daughter in temporary marriage. The Sasanian jurists regarded this form of marriage as an act of solidarity with a member of one's community which was sanctified as a religious duty.

Guardianship. Within a family, guardianship of the women and minors was the responsibility of the head of the family, the husband and father, while a widow and her children came under the guardianship of her grown-up son or of a brother-partner of her husband's. Should, however, the family be left without adult male members, the barriers of the family were lowered and an agnate was called to take up the task of guardian.

In the earliest epoch of Iranian society, two grounds or two procedures for such calling were known. The first – within the family – was entitled *būtak*, *būtakīh* ("natural"), and took place automatically, without formal request and appointment. The second, under which the basis for accession was the called person's membership of the same agnatic group and his kinship position in it, was invoked only if the first line had been exhausted. Entry into rights and duties on the basis of agnatic calling was attended by formal acts of request and appointment. This procedure took place at a meeting of all the adult members of the agnatic group within which and by decision of which the person called was being "appointed". For this reason a person called by the agnatic procedure (*pat rāh/hač kust ī nabānazdištīh*) was spoken of as *gumārtak*, literally, "appointed". Subsequently, with the extension of the rights of individuals, and especially of heads of families, and with the appearance of wills, a third basis for accession arose, namely, formal

institution or disposition. The head of a family could before his death nominate, in his will or in a formal declaration, the person who should become guardian of the family when he died. In making his choice he could ignore kinship-order and appoint a distant relative or even a fellow-citizen not related to him at all. A person called in this way (i.e. by formal disposition) was spoken of as *kartak*, "instituted". In order to enter into his rights he had to make a declaration agreeing to accept the disposition. If he declined it, the way was open for agnatic calling. There were certain differences in the rights of the person called, depending on the basis of his calling. Thus, functions entrusted to someone by agnatic calling (to an "appointed" person, gumārtak) could not be passed on to the successor of the person called, unlike functions received through "natural" (būtak) calling. The "appointed" person had no right to transfer his functions to anyone else. The "instituted" one (kartak) could not transmit his duties, but he could transfer them by way of a formal disposition. "Appointed" and "instituted" persons received regular remuneration (*tōšak*, "allowance") from the resources of the family on whose behalf they assumed their duties. In connection with these three lines of calling, it should be mentioned that we encounter them in other institutions as well – a guardian (*sardār*, *dūtak-sardār*) might be "natural", "appointed" or "instituted".

The agnates supervised the guardian's actions. If his behaviour proved unsatisfactory, inflicting losses on the family in wardship, a guardian of the second or third variety could be removed, and then the agnatic group appointed a fresh person. A guardian of any kind was obliged to make good within a twelvemonth any damage he had caused. One of the basic duties of a guardian was to administer the property of his wards, as far as possible without encroaching on the principal (*bun*). Wards could not take part in legal acts and procedures except jointly with their guardian; the latter could also act in their interests on his own, by natural right as their representative (*dastaβarīh*).

Succession. The men of ancient times were greatly concerned to safeguard their line of succession and to ensure maintenance by later generations of the domestic altar and the cult of the dead. It was regarded as extremely important that property accumulated by a family in the course of several generations, and providing the material basis both for carrying on religious ceremonies and services for the dead and for the activity of subsequent generations, should pass into the hands

of persons who were connected by name, blood and cult with the previous possessors. In this matter, religious consciousness was closely interwoven with social consciousness. It was not only the citizen of a Greek *polis* who was concerned "that his house should not be left without a name" (Isaeus, *Menecles*, 36), i.e., without a successor, since the absence of a successor would lead to *ἐρημία τοῦ οἴκου*, to "the extinction of the house", i.e., of the family; the magistrate-archon was also responsible for seeing to it that no house became extinct (Demosthenes, *Against Macartatus*, 75; Isaeus, *Apollodorus*, 30). Hence the important place accorded to succession in the law of every people of ancient times. It would, however, be no exaggeration to say that there was no people that went so far in this matter as the Iranians did, with their highly elaborate and strict, though complex, system of succession.

Iranian jurists drew a distinction between succession and inheritance. A person's successor might simultaneously be his heir (*xvāstakdār*), but it was also possible to be his successor without being heir to his property. Nor was every heir to the property of a given person simultaneously his successor: an heir might receive part of the dead man's estate through testamentary disposition, that is, through transfer and not through transmission (cf. *heres ex re certa*).

The succession to a person – the head of a family or an adult man – became open only at his death, whereas a man might become his father's heir (xvāstakdār) while his father was still alive. The Iranian system of succession (*aparmānd*) was divided into two categories. The first of these, called *aparmānd ī pat xvēšīh*, corresponded to necessary succession and inheritance (the *heredes sui* or *necessarii* of Roman law). It descended within the family, the first to be called being the children of the deceased born in full marriage, then his grandsons and great-grandsons. A person's successor, unlike his mere heir, inherited his personality – his name, his cult, his place in the agnatic group, the community and the social estate, and all his rights and duties, both active and passive. He began, so to speak, to represent the dead man, and this situation fully corresponded to the universal succession (*successio per universitatem*) well known from Roman law. Consequently, the successor was responsible for the dead man's debts *with all his property*, not merely with that which he had inherited from the dead man, as was the case with simple inheritance. In Iran each of the children born of one father in a pātixšayīh marriage became his universal successor, and primogeniture played no part in the matter. This affected sons mainly, since daughters,

when they married, ceased to be their father's successors, though they inherited a share in his property. Another characteristic feature was the observance of the rule of representation by generations: a grandson became successor to his father, and not to his grandfather, even if his father died while the latter was still alive and consequently had not taken up his succession. The successors of a dead man were also lawful heirs of his estate, acquiring it in individual shares (*bahr ī pat xvēšīh*) with the right and duty of transmitting it to their own successors. (This will be discussed in more detail below in connection with the law of property and rules of inheritance.)

The second category of succession, *aparmānd ī pat stūrīh*, came into play when the dead man had no male successor. This category, called *stūr*-successorship or stūr-ship (*stūrīh*), differed substantially from the one just described. The stūr-successor – he could also be defined as the subsidiary or substitute successor – incurred the duty of creating a succession to the dead man. A person, whether man or woman, who became a certain's man's stūr had to produce a son (*stūrīk pus*) who would be regarded as the legitimate son and heir of that man, his universal successor. For this reason only persons who were capable, or were thought to be capable, of producing children were called to stūr-ship. The stūr himself, though regarded as the (substitute) successor of the deceased, could not be his heir. The entire estate of the dead man "rested", so to speak, until the moment when the son given him by the stūr attained maturity and entered into his rights. In the Sasanian period, at least, an estate had to have a minimum value of 60 *satērs*, i.e. 240 drachms, for grounds to exist for etsablishing a stūr-ship to the deceased.

Depending on the basis for calling him, a stūr, like a guardian, could be of one of three kinds: "natural", "instituted" or "appointed". If the deceased left behind him a fairly young widow or a daughter, then this widow or this daughter (the eldest of his daughters, if there were several) had to take up her late husband's (or father's) succession and become his "natural" stūr. A widow, as her husband's čakar, entered into levirate marriage with an agnate of his, while a daughter who was called to her father's epiclerate entered into marriage *sine manu* with one of his agnates.

The čakar widow and epikleros-daughter were variants of stūr-successorship, and the son of the widow (*pus ī čakar*) or epikleros (*duxtdāt*, cf. Greek θυγατριδοῦς, Ancient Indian *putrikāputra*) were

variants of the *stūrik pus* created for the deceased by a substitute successor of the first category.

When a "natural" stūr had no male offspring, the duty of creating a succession for the deceased, his stūr-ship, passed to the stūr's daughter, and so on: within the limits of the "natural" line the duty of succession was subject to transmission, and there were actual cases when the grandson of a dead man's widow or the great-grandson of his daughter became his son and direct successor and heir. Within the framework of stūr-successorship the law of representation was transformed, and the order of representation by sequence of generations, which was characteristic of first-category successorship, had no application at all here. The son and successor provided by the stūr might be separated by several generations from the man who was this "son"s legal father and whose heir he was, by a whole chain of epikleros-daughters (in practice these would be the legal father's daughter, grand-daughter, great-grand-daughter, etc.). This situation under Ancient Iranian law finds its reflection in the Frēdūn-cycle of the *Shāh-Nāma*; in the legend which Firdausi worked up, Frēdūn is separated from his successor Manūchihr by a chain of seven epikleros-daughters.

If, however, the deceased left neither widows nor daughters nor an "instituted" stūr, his agnatic group was obliged to establish a stūr-ship for him, registering all the dead man's estate and appointing a stūr from among his agnates, usually the one most closely related to him. Such an "appointed" stūr might be either a woman or a man, but a woman was preferred. The woman called to stūr-ship (the dead man's sister or a remoter relation) must enter his family as his stūr-successor, and come under the guardianship of an agnate of his; her marriage with the agnate must be *sine manu mariti*, and the children regarded as the dead man's children. If a man was called to the stūr-ship of the deceased, then any son subsequently born to him was regarded as the son of the deceased. Because the question of guardianship did not arise in the case of a man, and his assumption of stūr-ship did not entail any change of place in the family or agnatic group, a man, unlike a woman, could be stūr to several persons at the same time, with the duty of providing a son-successor to each of them. Stūr-ship "by appointment" was not capable of transmission in the family of the "appointed" stūr, nor could the latter transfer his stūr-ship to anyone else, and if he proved unable to give the deceased a son, then a fresh appointment was made (the next closest agnate to the deceased being chosen).

An "instituted" stūr was named by the deceased before his death, either in his will or by a special disposition. "Instituted" stūr-ship not only made it possible to avoid the procedure of agnatic calling but also even the "natural" line (widow, daughter). The head of a family who already had a son, or even several sons, born of a full-right marriage, had the right to set up his stūr-successorship himself, apportioning for this purpose a sum (not less than the established minimum of 60 satērs) out of his personally accumulated or acquired property (property which he had inherited passed entirely by the line of necessary inheritance). He could designate as his stūr any person from outside his family (though, as a rule, from the same community), but also his daughter (even if she had brothers) and even his son (one of this son's sons became son and heir of his grandfather and not of his father), and the stūr fund of property he established was acquired by his heir (stūrīk pus) as his personal share of the estate. An "instituted" stūr-ship was not passed on by inheritance to the successors of a stūr who could not cope with his task, but the stūr himself, during his life, could transfer his stūr-ship to another man – otherwise agnatic calling (stūr-ship "by appointment") came into force.

4. LAW OF PROPERTY

The fact that Sasanian jurists used the generalized conception "thing" (*xvāstak*, (*h*)*ēr*) to mean both an object of value and an object of certain rights, leaving aside the form and concrete qualities of the particular thing (including its animate or non-animate nature), testifies to the high level of property law that had been worked out by the Iranians. The reader will find many illustrations of this in the summary exposition of this branch of Iranian law which is offered here.

The definition "thing" may apply to a plot of land, a house, the entire mass of an inheritance, cattle, a slave: "things" are specified, as a rule, only in those instances when their specific properties are important for the legal relationship under consideration. Two aspects of a thing are distinguished: the basis (*bun*, *mātak*) and the fruits, or the income, increase, interest (*bar*, *vindišn*, *vaxt*, *vaxš*). It is possible to convey real rights in either of these aspects separately and there can be extremely complex cases of this being done.

Groups of things (as also a divisible thing) can be thought of as one undivided whole (*abaxt*) and real rights in them can be acquired by a single title. Thus, the entire corpus of an inheritance is treated in

Sasanian law as a single unit, one "thing", the rights of the heirs being apportioned in accordance with the "ideal parts" of each of them in this jointly-inherited "thing". Corporally independent things could also be united into one whole on account of their real or imagined lack of economic independence: a slave, draught animals or a canal could be regarded as belonging to a piece of land – *dastkart*, its economic "inventory" (cf. the Roman *fundus instructus*) – and, consequently, constitute together with the piece of land a single (complex) thing, to be acquired by a single legal title.

A cardinal point in the Iranian theory of real rights was the distinction drawn between *de facto* possession of a thing, or possession in general (*dārišn*), and a person's having a right, a title to a thing (*dastaβarīh*). Judicial protection of someone's possession of a thing against encroachments by other people (as also revindication of a thing possessed *de facto* by someone else) was based on proof of either the entitlement (*patixšāyīh*, *dastaβarīh*) of the possessor or the claims of the revindicator. One had to prove that a thing *belonged* (*xvēšīh*) to a given person on some grounds or other, by presenting the court with a written document or by means of witnesses' statements.

Titles and the real rights (= *iura in re*) conferred by them could be of different kinds; accordingly, there were several ways or forms of "owning" a thing (*čand aδvēnak ī xvēšīh*) that is, holding it lawfully.

Regardless of the character of the real rights themselves (that is, of the form in which the thing "belonged" to a subject), acquisition of it could be achieved in two main ways, which were clearly distinguished in Iranian law, namely, either by transmission (*pat aparmānd*), i.e., by right of inheritance, or by conveyance (*pat dāt*), i.e., by legal transfer of some real rights. Acquisition by transmission took place only within the framework of succession (see section 3), *ipso jure*, and, as the subsequent exposition will make clear, the real rights acquired thereby could be diverse, as in the case of conveyance: only the right of private property could not be transmitted. Though acquisition by conveyance was not subject to similar restrictions, it had its own special features.

In Sasanian Iran transfer of real right had reached the level of an abstract deed: neither the type of right being transferred nor the character of the conveyance and the stipulated conditions mattered here. In each individual instance of conveyance the person conveying mentioned, of course, both the variety of right that was being transferred and the conditions, since in the absence of these specifications the

effect of the conveyance was seen as transfer of the thing to the receiving person as an hereditary possession to be incorporated into his "portion". But there was a common form of conveyance of real rights, which was generalized and embraced a great variety of cases involving contracts of conveyance. Iranian conveyance thus shows a certain similarity to Roman *traditio* and was just as "bodiless": its object, the thing, does not affect it, and may not even be present at the actual proceedings. Moreover, it was possible to transfer to another person only the right of conveyance of a certain real right (in a specified thing or a defined value) to any third person. This flexible form was particularly employed in complicated credit and commercial operations, in which sphere it opened extensive possibilities for combination.

The conditions necessary for conveyance were: (*a*) the existence of two wills, the will of the conveyor to renounce, wholly or in part, his right to a thing in favour of the other person, and the will of the acquirer to receive this right; (*b*) the existence of right on the part of the conveyor to dispose of the thing, to the extent, at least, of alienating a certain real right, and on the part of the acquirer a certain real capacity (i.e. right to acquire).

In accordance with these conditions, a conveyance was made up of two acts: the first was a declaration by the conveyor in the presence of witnesses (it might be accompanied by the drawing-up of a written document); the second was a declaration made also publicly, by the acquirer (or his guardian, if the acquirer was a subordinate person) of his approval and acceptance of the transfer.[1] The first act did not by itself constitute a conveyance of a real right, which continued to belong to the conveyor, but by virtue of this act the acquirer was given the right to put forward a claim, unless the conveyor retracted his declaration within three days of making it. Transfer of real rights was effected only after the declaration of acceptance. There might be an interval of time between these two acts, and this could even be of considerable duration. The moment when the conveyance took effect could, of course, also depend on conditions stipulated by the conveyor. Thus a conveyance might take effect upon the death of the conveyor (so that it bore the character of a *mortis causa* disposition) or it might be made subject to some condition (resolutive or suspensive), etc.

The conveyor or the acquirer might be not only a physical person

[1] The legal terms for describing the first act were (*kāmak*) *guftan*, *kartan*, *paytākēnītan*, and for the second *sahišn guftan*, *kamak dōšītan*, *patigirišn paytākēnītan*.

(one or several) but also a juridical person, and the procedure was no different when a party to the transfer was of the latter kind. Thus, according to the Law-Book, when real rights to a piece of land or other property belonging to the king's demesne are being transferred, the declaration of conveyance has to be made by the official who is authorized to represent the juridical person (the royal demesne) in private contracts. It is stated in particular that a declaration of conveyance (*dāt paytāk kartan*) falls in the competence of the *ōstāndār* in charge of the department which administers the royal demesne in the given province.

If the object of conveyance was part of an indivisible thing, then, as a result of the conveyance, relations of co-partnership and co-ownership were established between the conveyor and the acquirer, just as when something was conveyed to several persons jointly. When property was conveyed into stūr possession (see above, section 3, on "instituted stūr-ship"), the conveyance formed part of the act of institution.

Varieties of real rights. Sasanian jurists distinguished the following varieties of real rights, or as they put it, "ways of owning a thing", *aδvēnak ī xvēšīh* (also "ways of holding, or possessing, a thing", *aδvēnak ī dāšt*):

1. *Hereditary possession of family property* (*xvāstakdārīh*; *bahr*; *bahr pat xvēšīh*; *vāspuhrakān*) (family ownership, or shares in this).[1] To this category also belonged rights in property obtained by conveyance as a hereditary portion. The characteristic feature of this category was the possessor's lack of the right to free alienation of the immovable property, of its "principal" (bun), which was subject to transmission to the necessary successor of the possessor, though the possessor had the right freely to dispose of and to acquire (as private property) the income arising from it. But hereditary property was available for any dealings which did not involve alienation of the principal (transfer of ownership rights) but merely transfer of the right of possession or exploitation (for example, various forms of rent, deposit, antichresis-security, etc.). Alienation of the "principal" was permissible only within the possessor's agnatic group (with the assent of his necessary heirs), and outside the agnatic group only with the group's assent (see also below, p. 665 under the heading "Family possessions and the law of inheritance").

[1] Not to be confused with possession through inheritance by private treaty, as with conditional possessions.

2. *Private property* (*ḫandōxt ī xvēš*, literally "individually accumulated" or "acquired" property, cf. Greek, τὸ αὐτόκτητον, τὰ ἐπικτητά; also *xvēš*, *xvēšīh ī xvēš*). To this category belonged certain forms of movable property (clothing, small utensils, personal chattels) and privately-acquired income (from possessions of any category), as well as everything (including land) bought "for a price" (*pat arž*), or acquired by transfer as a gift (by the formula: "let this thing be thine!", *ēn xvāstak tō xvēš hēβ bavēt*) and privately owned. Things obtained by a person as his private property could be freely alienated by him. After his death, however, those privately owned things in his possession which he had not disposed of in his lifetime were made part of his estate and were acquired by his heir as a "portion" of his inheritance, and not as his private property. Common to this and the previous variety was the circumstance that possession by these titles could be subjected to tax but not to rent.

3. *Lease.* Two types of lease were known to Iranian law, lease for a fixed term and indefinite lease (emphyteusis). The leaseholder was bound to make annual payments of a fixed lease-charge, or rent to the owner (or basic possessor) of the leased thing, regardless of the income obtained from it. Retention by the person letting the property of his fundamental real right was also expressed in his undertaking an obligation (upon himself and his successor) to guarantee the leaseholder's rights of possession (and those of his successor) during the agreed period of the lease and to protect them from infringement by third parties; it was also expressed in the right to bring an action or to cancel the lease in the event of failure by the leaseholder to observe the conditions of the lease or of his causing damage to the leased property. According to the Law-Book, the object of a lease for a fixed term could be either immovable property or slaves. For the Parthian period, the Avroman parchments provide examples of emphyteutic lease documents, the parties to the transaction being private persons. Many economic documents from Parthian Nisā contain the term *'wpsyk* (cf. also *ptsyk*), which shows that the vineyards situated around Mihrdātkert, which were mostly royal foundations for pious purposes, had been let out on emphyteutic leases to private persons. The same expression is found in the Law-Book where it stands for a fixed rent paid by the emphyteuta to the owner or basic possessor of the

leaseholding. This document also mentions the practice of letting out parts of the royal demesne on hereditary emphyteutic lease and the fact that rent in such cases was paid into the king's treasury.

4–5. The Sasanian jurists included among the varieties of real rights also deposit, or more precisely, possession (usually without the right of exploitation) of a deposited thing *(ā)yāmdārīh* and possession of an antichresis-security (*graβkāndārīh*) – with right of usufruct (*bar-xvēš*) – on the part of a creditor. Like the right of possession of a leaseholder, including a hereditary (emphyteutic) leaseholder, these were derived real rights, arising from an agreement and linked with its conditions and period of effect.

6. *Conditional holdings.* Conditional possession of immovable property (land, farmsteads, etc.), granted in return for service, apparently already existed in the Achaemenian state. In any case we know of transfer in the Seleucid state of complexes of land and farm buildings on the royal demesne into conditional possession by persons charged with the performance of administrative and fiscal duties in the whole region of the king's demesne around the complex in question. This system of conditional possessors (of the type of Mnesimachos in the Laodice inscription in Asia Minor) on the king's demesne greatly facilitated the management of the latter. It may be seen (apparently as an Achaemenian-Seleucid heritage) in Hellenistic-Arsacid Armenia, where every holder of the king's land was called *ōstānīk* and the possession linked with his service was passed on, like the service itself, from father to son, becoming hereditary. The department for managing the royal lands in the Sasanian state, called *dīvān ī ōstāndārīh*, certainly inherited this system, which seems to have operated in Iran for not less than ten centuries.

The Law-Book mentions the allotment of land by the treasury, for lifetime possession on condition of military service, to the men enrolled in the "List of Horsemen" (*Asaβār-nipīk*). Such lands were called *pat ēmōčān*, literally, "for provision of outfit", and after the holder's death the land returned to the treasury. Similar transfers into conditional possession were made from the temple estates to the Zoroastrian clergy. In all instances of conditional possession, which often became hereditary, the fundamental real right belonged not to the holders of the land, but to the royal clan, the treasury or the temple or the Zoroastrian church. Being the owners of these properties they could, acting

as juridical persons through the officials who represented them, bring actions against the holders before a civil court, a practice reflected in the Law-Book.

7. *Private endowments for fixed purposes*, or *pat ruvan* ("for the soul") *pat ahravdāt* ("for pious purposes") foundations, were an institution highly characteristic of Iran and will be considered in more detail. They were "funds" established by individuals (through a formal appointment by means of a declaration in documentary form) from the property belonging to these persons. The specific purposes of the fund (usually of a pious nature) were determined by the founder himself and set forth in the foundation endowment deed. The fund or contribution thus set apart by the founder constituted a dedicated "principal", which could be neither encroached upon nor alienated.

The income or profit arising from this "principal" (there were also "profitless" foundations) was assigned in the following manner: part of it went for the upkeep of the "principal" (*uzēnak ī pat bun*), as expenditure for cultivation and depreciation charges (including payment to the trustees); part went for payment of taxes, if the property was subject to tax; and the rest went for the pious purposes indicated by the founder (such as, for example, the holding of services, distribution of alms, provision of meals for festivals, etc.), in strict accordance with his instructions. Anything that remained after meeting these necessary expenses, the entire "surplus", in fact, was fully at the disposal of the founder, while he lived, or of his heirs. These foundations took a variety of forms. They could be either immovable property which produced fruits or profit, in which case "the fruits were also regarded as dedicated", or immovable property which provided no income. The income from a piece of land assigned to a foundation was used for the purposes laid down by the founder, together with the profit (if it existed in the form of payments for use) from works of social utility such as canals, bridges or aqueducts, built at the expense of the founder. However, the building of such works as bridges or aqueducts was in itself an act of "social beneficence" and was imputed to the "piety" of the founder. An example of such a work, the ruins of which still exist, is the bridge built in the 5th century by Mihr-Narseh, *vazurg-framātar* of Iran, in the town of Gōr (now Fīrūzābād). The inscription still surviving on this bridge proclaims: "This bridge was built by order of Mihr-Narseh, *vazurg-framātar*, for his soul's sake (*ruvān ī xvēš rāδ*) and at his own

expense...Whoever has come on this road let him give a blessing to Mihr-Narseh and his sons for that he thus bridged this crossing."[1]

The purpose of an endowment might be the building of a fire-altar or a temple "for the salvation of the soul" of the founder himself or some other person designated by him. We learn from Ṭabarī that this same Mihr-Narseh founded four fire-temples, one of these, *Mihr Narsēyān*, being for his own soul, and the other three "for the souls" of his three sons. The seals of the priests of two of these temples have survived, and the temples themselves were discovered near Fīrūzābād and identified by E. Herzfeld and A. Godard.[2]

An earlier example of the endowment of altars and temples "for the soul" is found in the great inscription of Shāpūr I. After mentioning the foundation by Shāpūr of five fire-temples "for the souls and commemoration" of members of the royal family, the inscription goes on (lines 19–20): "And what we have conveyed to this Fire, and the order we have laid down (i.e., the specific conditions of this *pat ruvān* endowment – A.P.), are in like manner set forth in a (legal – A.P.) document. And out of the thousand lambs which are by right due to us from the surplus (*trkpyšn*),[3] and which we have ceded ("conveyed") to these Fire-temples, we make the following disposition: let an offering be made for our soul each day ("day by day") of one lamb, one *grīv* and eight *ḥwpn* of corn and four *p's* of wine." It follows from this, first, that the foundation of the Fire-temples was accompanied by the conveyance to it of property, in particular, holdings of land and cattle; second, that Shāpūr I's endowment was made in conformity with the customs known to us from the Law-Book and by way of a formal deed of private law, with the drawing up of a legal document in which were recorded all the conditions and orders of the act of institution, this document[4] being

[1] See W. B. Henning, "The Inscription of Firuzabad", *Asia Major* IV (1954), pp. 98–102.

[2] J. Harmatta, "Die sassanidischen Siegelinschriften", *AAntASH* XII (1964), pp. 229–230; E. Herzfeld, "Reisebericht", *ZDMG* LXXX (1926), p. 256; *idem*, *Archaeological History of Iran* (London, 1935), pp. 91 ff.; A. Godard, "Les quatres čahār-ṭāqs de la vallée de Djerrè", *Āthār-e Irān* III (1938), pp. 169–73.

[3] In the inscription, *'bdyny YḤW-t* "ought (to be due) by right". The precise meaning of this expression has been established with the help of an Ancient-Armenian copy; Armenian *awrēn* (from Parthian aβδēn), together with a conjugated form of the verb "to be", cf. Armenian *awrēn ē*. Cf. also what has been said earlier about the usual ways in which income arising from the endowment was distributed.

[4] In the Parthian version *ptyḥštr*, in the Middle-Persian *p'tḥštr* = *patixšahr* (cf. *patšir*, borrowed during the Sasanian period by Armenian), which literally means "a title, a document giving title". In the Greek version the Iranian term is rendered by an expression which exactly corresponds to it: *ἔνγραφος τοῦ ἀσφαλίσματος τῆς τειμῆς* "a title-document (a certificate) on the transfer (of property) for a religious purpose". An oblique reference to

mentioned in the inscription. The importance of the property ("the principal") transferred by Shāpūr to the foundation may be inferred from the fact that a thousand lambs might constitute one fixed part of that surplus of the income which normally went to the founder; this part of the surplus due to him after the necessary expenses had been met was assigned by Shāpūr to a special (additional) fund for the maintenance of services and offerings.

Parthian potsherds from Nisā testify to the existence of this institution in the Parthian period. A considerable proportion of the vineyards and other holdings situated round Mihrdātkert were endowments for a fixed purpose, dedicated to the upkeep of services for the repose of the souls of the Arsacid kings: Mithradates (the endowment called *Mihrdātakān*), Gotarzes (*Gotarzakān*), Priapatius (*Friyapatīkān*), Artabanus (*Artabānukān*), and so on. As mentioned earlier, the cultivation of at least part of these vineyards was carried on by vinegrowers (*razkār*, *razpān*) who had received holdings on emphyteutic lease and were obliged to pay (to the royal treasury, since the endowments were royal ones) a fixed annuity in kind (*'wpsyk*, *ptsyk* in the Nisā documents).

Besides endowments "for the soul" there were also money investments (*nihātak*) for the performance of rites and services. This was likewise a donation for a purpose, with obligatory effect, but of a different type.

The endowment might be entirely separated from the property of the founder's family. Thus, a fire-altar or an endowment-holding might be transferred to a great temple, while a bridge or a road might be transferred to a public or government department. Equally typical, however, was the retention of the "endowment" as the property of the founder's family, though as a completely distinct part of it, with the use of it strictly governed by the purpose of its dedication, in accordance with the régime set down for it, and without any right to alienate it or to alter its legal status. Trusteeship of the endowment was usually kept within the family of the founder (even when it was separated from the family property) but the founder had the right to transfer the trusteeship to any other person, outside his family, or to the priests of the temple. In particular, the inscription of the priest Kartīr tells us that trusteeship of all the fixed-purpose endowments made by Shāpūr was

documents defining this and other endowments by Shāpūr is contained in the inscription of the priest Kartīr (*KZ*), which shows, in particular, that the originals of these documents were deposited in a building specially constructed for the purpose (*bun-xānak*).

assigned by this king to Kartīr (with the right to transmit this trusteeship to his personal successors).

In Sasanian Iran, general supervision of these institutions was undertaken by a special department or secretariat, *dīvān ī kartakān* (literally, "office for religious institutions"), which not only registered the endowments and took charge of the documents relating to each of them, but might also act as trustee. According to the Law-Book, supervision of endowments "for the soul" was part of the prerogative of the *moyān andarẓpat*. In the list of Sasanian dignitaries given by al-Khwārazmī mention is also made of the *ruvānakān dipīr*, apparently an official with authority throughout the empire.

The *pat ruvān* institution was taken over, in a modified form, by the Manicheans, who also called it *ruvānagān*,[1] but this time-honoured Iranian institution[2] was even more extensively adopted by the Arabs and Islam. There can now be no doubt of the Iranian origin of the Muslim *waqf*. The resemblance in legal régime between Iranian endowments for a fixed purpose and waqf properties is striking. There is the same non-consumable "principal", the income from which is dedicated to pious or beneficent purposes; the same way of distributing the income; the same retention of the obligation to pay the taxes imposed on the property before the act of institution. The conditions and forms of the foundation are the same, including the irrevocability of the act of institution. Similar too is the way of administering waqf properties through trustees (*nāẓir*, *mutawallī*), nominated (at least in the case of the first trustee) by the founder (*wāqif*) himself. Finally, there are the same two forms we have seen in the *pat ruvān* institution, namely, *waqf khairī*, that is, private foundations of a public character – mosques,

[1] In *Acta Archelai* 16.11 this term is rendered by the Greek εὐσέβεια, "piety" (cf. Iranian *ahravdāt*). Some information about this is contained in Middle-Persian Manichean documents, in one of which it is said, for example: "and through this their (investment) for the soul, these hearers are united ('merged') with purifying religion and find a common portion with the elect (*electi*)". In the Manichaean monasteries there was a person, *ruvānagān spāsag*, whose task it was to look after the endowments dedicated by the "hearers"; see Andreas and Henning, "Mitteliranische Manichaica II", *SPAW* 1933, p. 317; E. Benveniste, "Un titre iranien manichéen en transcription chinoise", *Mélanges Raymonde Linossier* I (Paris, 1932), pp. 155–8.

[2] The correlative institution in ancient India was called *utsarga*. In India, too, "endowments" took different forms; besides foundations for socially useful purposes (*pūrtá*), which provided for the construction of wells, reservoirs, shelters and so on, "endowments" were also dedicated to the restoration of temples and the setting up in them of images of the gods (*pratiṣṭhā*). In the Smṛtis we find mention of rent (*nibandha*) regularly paid for a specified purpose. A piece of "endowment" land is in later documents called *devasthān*, "land belonging to God". There is epigraphic evidence that such endowments were set up by King Aśoka.

schools, bridges and the like – and *waqf ahlī*, that is, endowments not separated from the family property. Such a coincidence in both real and formal aspects can hardly be accidental. Ḥanafī tradition assigns the appearance of the waqf and its spread among the Arabs to the end of the first century after the Prophet's death, that is, to the very period when Iran was conquered by the Arabs. It is not surprising, therefore, that al-Khwārazmī translates the Sasanian title *ruvānakān dipīr* into Arabic as *kitābat al-awqāf*.

Family possessions and the law of inheritance. The mass of possessions, movable and immovable, at the disposal of a family consisted of a number of things subject to different legal régimes. In ancient Iran it comprised the following elements:

(i) the property owned by the family which had been inherited by the head of the family by right of succession;

(ii) the private property of the head of the family and of the members of the family;

(iii) the possessions held by the head of the family (or by members of the family) through the right arising from private contracts (leases and the like), and properties in conditional possession (granted "for service", e.g., a "horseman's allotment");

(iv) the surplus income from a private endowment for a fixed purpose founded by the head of the family or his predecessors;

(v) a woman's inherited portion brought by her as dowry from her father's home to her husband's;

(vi) stūr-property (through the right of usufruct enjoyed by a stūr who was a member of this family).

The whole of the wealth concentrated in a family fell into two main categories, namely: (*a*) *aparmānd ī pitarān*, "inherited from ancestors"; (*b*) *handōxt ī xvēš*, "accumulated personally". This distinction between *aparmānd* and *handōxt* was very important in relation to the right of disposition. It fully coincided with the distinction in Greek law between property "inherited from ancestors" (τὰ πατρῷα, τὰ παππῷα) and property "acquired" (τὰ αὐτόκτητα, τὰ ἐπίκτητα). Any property the right to which was based on contract and was limited by the terms of the contract fell, of course, outside both these categories, as did also endowments for a fixed purpose. But the surplus income from any property might pass into the category of "personally accumulated" property.

The aparmānd category included the head of the family's own share of the inheritance left by his father, his "son's portion" (*bahr ī pusīh*; *bahr ī xvēš*; *vāspuhrakān*). It also included the portion brought by his wife (her "daughter's portion", *bahr ī duxtīh*; *vāspuhrakān*) and, if the mother of the head of the family was alive, her "widow's portion" (*bahr ī katak-bānūkīh*) of the inheritance left by her deceased husband, as well as the portion of any unmarried sister. The "principal" of all this property was not alienable (not freely, at any rate) and was subject to transmission to the successors of the head of the family. The successor had the right to dispose freely only of the income or increase that came to him, and, of course, of consumable things. A woman disposed of income if she was either in co-partnership with her husband or brother or if she had been specially accorded this right. Undoubtedly the head of the family also had the right to make various forms of investment and improvements on this property, and the right to exploit it (by granting it out on lease). Aparmānd property was family property and belonged, in principle, to the family, its past, present and future generations. Each living generation was in the position of a holder obliged to preserve what it had inherited and pass it on to the next generation of the family.

Any income left over after payment of taxes and all necessary expenses (maintenance of the family, productive expenditure) could be disposed of by the head of the family at his discretion, like that which he had "personally accumulated". To the category of "acquired" property, besides the unconsumed part of the income from the inherited property, belonged property acquired by the head of the family or members of it "for a price", or by transfer as gifts, and also as personal wages (including payments for guardianship over other families, for stūr-ship, and for trusteeship over fixed-purpose endowments). Like aparmānd property, personal property could take the form of any valuable object: a piece of land, a house, a slave, money. But this was private property and the person who owned it could dispose of it at his own discretion; it was available for any kind of transaction. Foundations for fixed purposes were endowed from it, and a man who already had children could establish an additional succession (*stūr ī kartak*) out of his private means. From his private resources the head of the family could, while living, make transfers of "portions" to his children, in legal form. Later, when the children inherited, these transfers were added to their share of the inheritance. Here the strictly personal

character of this real right should be stressed: a thing that was privately owned could be disposed of only by its owner or by a person specially empowered by him for this purpose and acting on his instructions. The head of a family could, by virtue of his patriarchal authority, dispose of the income from the private possessions of those subordinate to him, but had no right to alienate or encroach upon their "principal". When an owner of property died without having made disposition of his private property, this property was incorporated in his inheritance and acquired by his successors as "aparmānd" property, that is, family property subject to transmission.[1] In other words, the right of private property was not transmissible. As a result, the fund of family property tended to grow by the addition to it of undisposed personal (= private) property. The Iranian rule of incorporation might contribute to this growth in still another way. If a father made substantial gift-transfers to his children out of his private property during his lifetime, then, in order to avoid undue inequality in inheritance shares, a gift like this was taken into account when the total amount of his estate was distributed among his successors: it had to be included in the portion inherited by the recipient (*pat bahr hangārišn*).

These circumstances – to which may be added the law of annexation, to be described later – made it possible to maintain a general stability in the amount of family property in spite of such disruptive factors as the development of private property and the growth of commodity and money relations, not to speak of the steady break-up of family property that took place with each new generation. Though family property, being a variety of collective property, was in principle inalienable, in practice this could not apply absolutely. Family property could not only be hypothecated but could also be used to pay debts, that is, it could be alienated in emergencies. Moreover, the desire of a hereditary possessor to alienate it, despite the traditional ban on this, could be fulfilled if he obtained the consent of all the potential inheritors: the necessary heirs of the possessor, his co-heirs and his agnates.[2] On the other hand, the feature of private property mentioned above was due in its turn to the fact that, despite the considerable relative weight of this form of property in Sasanian Iran, it was family property that was predominant in the social and economic spheres, and not private

[1] In fact this applied mainly to immovables, farm implements and the like, and not to more perishable things such as clothing, small utensils, etc.

[2] Alienation of *aparmānd* property, though at first allowed only within the possessor's agnatic group, later became possible also within his civic community.

property. For this reason, Sasanian jurists were unable to make that clearcut distinction between real right of property (private, collective and public) and real right of possession (of any title) which appeared in the legal thinking of men living closer to our own day. What was important for them was the question of title: around this axis they constructed their entire classification of real rights.

When the head of the family died, the entire amount of property he left behind him (aparmānd and acquired property not set apart in a special fund were merged in this total amount of property) was available for transmission to his successors. In accordance with the two categories of successors (see section 3), inheritance could be acquired in one of two ways: the necessary heirs of the dead man obtained inheritance in the form of their "personal" portions (*pat bahr ī xvēš/xvēšīh*),[1] or there was substitutive successorship in the form of stūr-possession (*pat stūrīh*). The difference between these forms of succession has already been pointed out and also the fact that the sons, being their father's necessary heirs, were also, each and every one of them, his universal successors by law. In theory, each of several sons reproduced the personality of his father and took all that he left, but he was limited in his claims by the existence of co-heirs, namely, his brothers, whose position and rights were equal to his own. Moreover in quite early times (at any rate, within the period under review) the women of the family, that is the widow (or widows) and daughters of the full-right marriage had come into a share of the inheritance. All heirs took the inheritance jointly, in "ideal" shares allotted as follows: a "son's" share (*bahr ī pusīh*), as also a "widow's" (*bahr ī katak bānūkīh*), was twice as big as a "daughter's" (*bahr ī duxtīh*). This rule of inheritance was followed whether or not partition (*baxtīkīh*) of the property among the co-heirs took place. If there was no partition, then the co-heirs were legally co-possessors and co-partners – with the right, of course, to leave the co-partnership if they so wished, taking their personal portion. Here, however, there was a difference between male and female successors. A woman would obtain her inheritance and take it away only jointly with another co-heir, a son or brother – as the Sasanian jurists put it, *pat rāh ī dō-kasīh*, literally, "by way of partnership". A daughter who got married received her "daughter's" portion as her dowry, which she then brought into her husband's family.

Thus the rules by which family property was transmitted took into account the interests of all the necessary heirs, all the sons receiving

[1] Cf. also τὸ ἴδιον μέρος in Avroman I.

equal shares; in Iran there was no right of primogeniture in matters of inheritance.[1] And regardless of whether or not a son separated from the other co-heirs, his share of his father's estate was safeguarded against any infringement by other persons, including claims by his brothers. He transferred it to his personal successor, who carried on his "name" and cult, for his share fell to him *pat yāvētānīk*, for "eternal" continuation of his "line".

The collective character of family property and the unity of its inheritance found expression in the latent right enjoyed by all the successors to inherit from each other. An example of this was the right to annex the share of a dead person who had left no successor (son or stūr) to the share of his co-heir, as also a brother's right to annex to his share of the inheritance the share of his unmarried sister, in the event of her death.

The régime of family property and its inheritance which I have described was common to all strata of Iranian society. It applied in the king's family no less than in others. All members of that family who were necessary heirs obtained their personal share of the total possessions of the royal household (*ōstān*). The reigning monarch also received his *vāspuhrakān*, his "son's share", representing his personal demesne, the receipts from which – taxes, rents and the like – formed his private fund, his "acquired property" (*handōxt ī xvēš*). Since the possessions of the royal household, scattered all over the country, were extensive, administration of the ōstān was undertaken by a special department called *dīvān ī ōstāndārīh*. The King's personal demesne was also quite large and it had its own administration. A dignitary invested with executive authority within this demesne, *andarzpat ī vāspuhrakān*, is mentioned in the sources together with a finance official, *hamārkar ī vāspuhrakān*.

5. THE LAW OF OBLIGATIONS

Binding agreements are mentioned as early as the Avesta, where, along with general expressions rendering the concept "treaty, agreement" (Av. *miθra-*; *urvaiti-*), the categories of such agreements are also set forth.[2] But no law of obligations in the strict sense of the word is to be

[1] Primogeniture was recognized, however, in the order of calling, for example, to guardianship or to trusteeship of a fixed-purpose endowment.

[2] Vendidād IV.2–13. This classification is based on two principles: for the first two types of agreement it is the form in which they are concluded (Av. *vačahina-* "verbal agreement"; Av. *zastā. maršta-* "agreement sealed by a handshake"), for the other four it is the size of the value of the security given (*e.g.* Av. *pasu. maza-*, *staorō. maza-*, agreements in which the security given was equal to the value of one sheep or one ox, respectively).

found in the Avesta. Conclusion of agreements and supervision of their fulfilment came within the sphere of customary law. Breach of an agreed obligation was regarded as a religious offence, and the fear of divine wrath, and also reluctance to forfeit the security given or stipulated and, especially, the collective responsibility of agnates, helped to ensure the fulfilment of an obligation.

We find a different situation in the Iran of Parthian and Sasanian times. Here an authentic and very highly developed law of obligations emerges. Its characteristic features are, first, the fixing of the agreement in written form, in a contractual document; second, the existence of different ways of ensuring the fulfilment of obligations; third, judicial protection of the interests of the parties, since every formal agreement gave the parties to it the right to bring an action. With the development of economic life the sphere of application of agreements expanded immeasurably.

The extensive practice of giving written form to agreements (*pašt*; *patmān*) led to the working out of precise formulas for contractual documents of different kinds. Usually the contractual document was prepared in several copies (never less than two), so that each party received a copy of his own, and the document was sealed with a clay seal.[1] Also widespread (especially where transactions in immovable property were concerned) was the registration of agreements with the courts or departmental secretariats, and the preservation in departmental archives of a copy of every private document issued by the department in question. It is not surprising, therefore, that besides terms for the concepts "document" (e.g., *dip*, *nāmak*, *nipīk*, *nipištak*, *vičīr*, *fravartak*), "original" (*bun*, *mātak*) and "copy" (*pačēn*, *hampačēn*), there were also "specialized" terms (*patixšahr*, "document of title"; *āzāt-nāmak*, "manumission document"; *hilišn-nāmak*, "divorce document", and so on). Though the sphere of application of the verbal contract diminished to the point where it was mainly confined to transactions in movable property, elements of this ancient form survived in the ceremony of concluding an agreement which preceded the preparation of the written document. The contracting parties made declarations in the presence of witnesses and before a magistrate, repeating certain formulae three times over. In the clauses of the documents themselves traces of the influence of the verbal contract are noticeable.

[1] A document which lacked a seal was regarded as invalid. In the Law-Book a document is defined as the unity of the written text and the seal ("clay").

One method of ensuring the fulfilment of obligations was the fine (*tāvān*) stipulated in the event of non-fulfilment. Such a penal clause appears, for example, in two of the Avroman parchments (a fine of 200 drachms is to be paid to the injured party and the same amount is to go to the king's treasury), and a similar practice is mentioned in the Law-Book. Another method of guarantee attested by the Law-Book was the stipulation of smart-money.

Stipulations regarding fines and smart-money, when recorded in the contractual document, gave the right to make a claim before the court in the event of non-fulfilment by one of the parties of the obligation itself or of the conditions stipulated in the agreement, for example, performance within a specified period of time. A widely used method of guaranteeing performance (especially in credit agreements) was the appointment of one or more sureties (*pāyandān*). The appointing of sureties, or warranty, took place by a special verbal agreement, concluded separately from the agreement creating the promissory obligation, fulfilment of which the warrantor undertook to guarantee. He made a declaration to the creditor, in the presence of not fewer than three witnesses, the formula for which, "I am the warrantor of such-and-such a person in respect of this thing (i.e., the debt)", is given in the Law-Book. His rôle as warrantor was recorded in the document which embodied the main agreement. A warranty agreement created a personal liability to the creditor by the warrantor to settle the debt in full if the contractor of the main agreement (the debtor) should fail to do so within the period laid down. On the other hand, it gave the warrantor, after settling the debt, the right of regress to the debtor, who was bound to make good the expenditure incurred by the warrantor.

If, however, there were several warrantors for one debt, who declared themselves co-warrantors, they were regarded as persons with joint liability, and the creditor could demand full payment of the debt from any of them, since in principle each of the co-warrantors (*ham-pāyandān*) underwrote the credit agreement as a whole (he had, of course, right of regress to the other co-warrantors). Joint liability, or correality – in Middle-Persian it was called *hamxvāstakīh* – appeared also in the case of a credit agreement concluded by several persons so that their debt was common to them all (joint debtors). Such correal debtors could conclude a concurrent agreement for a co-warranty; the Law-Book cites an interesting example of "cross-paired" co-warranty.

Joint liability resulted also from co-partnership contracts (*hambāyīh*). This type of agreement might be made for a variety of purposes. It was

often concluded between merchants (commercial partnership), and the Law-Book also mentions co-partnership formed in order to construct irrigation canals. Agreements on co-warranty, correal debt and co-partnership were united by the Sasanian jurists in a single group, the typical principle of which was joint liability (or correality). Co-partnership relations could also exist without special liability agreements. The undivided family of brothers is an example of such a natural co-partnership.

The Pahlavī legal texts also contain information about other sorts of contract. Among these are the exchange agreement (*guharīk*, *guharēn*), in which distinction is made between equivalent exchange (*guharēn ī rāst*) and non-equivalent exchange; the latter was permitted only if the advantage obtained by one of the parties did not exceed one-quarter of the value of the thing exchanged. Only a few articles in the Law-Book are devoted to the subject of barter, but these contain valuable information about this very ancient form of transaction. It was apparently accorded quite an important place in the legal nasks of the Avesta, as may be inferred from a special chapter in the *Dēnkart*, *Dar ī guharīkistān*, "chapter about exchange".[1] The object of barter mentioned both in the Law-Book and in the *Dēnkart* is also characteristic of this type of exchange – namely, cattle, which evidently became the standard example used in legal texts. An exchange agreement could arise also as the alternative solution in a contract concluded for purchase and sale (*xrītakīh*; *pat vahāk dāt/frōxt*). The object of sale might be any object of value. What mattered for the transaction to be valid was not the nature of the object sold but the seller's possession of real right to it, the unconditional right to alienate it; it was forbidden, for instance, to sell a Zoroastrian slave to a non-Zoroastrian: such a transaction was regarded as illegal and equivalent to the crime of larceny. The purchaser must have a corresponding legal capacity for liability and acquisition. Thus, a woman could not be the purchaser of immovable property, nor could she acquire, as her own property, more than two slaves.

The sale of immovable property, entailing as it did the transfer of real right to this property, was usually recorded in writing. But an agreement for an emphyteutic lease was clothed in the form of a sale contract, and only the proviso about the liability of the "purchaser" and his successors to cultivate the holding and pay a fixed rent reveals the true nature of the transaction.

[1] *Dēnkart*, ed. Madan, 737.6–738.14.

The transfer of real right to the purchaser took place immediately on his payment of the purchase price, though physical delivery of the thing might not be made till later. The seller was obliged to keep safe (*druvist dāštan*) the thing sold until it was delivered to the buyer, together with any income arising from it since the day the transaction was concluded; otherwise, the purchaser had the right to demand indemnification for the loss. Any lengthy retention of the purchased thing by the seller was usually made the subject of a deposit agreement.

Sale might take place on a credit basis, but in that case still another type of agreement applied, namely, the credit transaction or loan contract. We have detailed information about the loan contract (*ăpām*).[1] Besides the stipulated fine and the warranty this type of agreement had other special means of protecting the creditor's interests. These were the conclusion of a subsidiary contract for establishing a security (usually higher in value than the loan) out of the debtor's property and the provision often stipulated in credit contracts that an interest-free loan should become interest-bearing if the debt is not paid off in the agreed time. Moreover a written agreement provided a legal safeguard for the creditor's possession of the pledge and also served as a promissory note. For this reason the copy of the contract held by the creditor was returnable to the debtor as soon as he had paid off his debt.

Loans were made either without interest (*a-vaxt*) or at interest (*pat vaxš*), the standard rate of interest in Iran being, to judge from "The Lawbook of Yišō'boxt", 20 per cent per annum. However, the total amount of interest accumulated on a loan was not allowed to exceed the capital lent; the same provision existed in Indian law. In the case of an interest-free loan, the security (*graβ*, *graβakān*) took the form either of pledge (= deposit-security), or of hypothec, and there was also antichresis-security usual with interest-bearing loans. In the latter case the object serving as security was either a piece of land or a slave. The yield of the land was appropriated by the creditor (after deduction of tax or rent) and represented the interest on the loan; the income from exploitation of the slave left by the debtor with the creditor was also accounted as interest. In one of the cases quoted in the Law-Book the creditor hired out such a slave to a third person, taking the rent paid by the hirer as

[1] The term *ăpām* was doubtless originally connected with the loan of a certain thing (Roman *commodatum*), a form of obligation more ancient than the loan of money (Roman *mutuum*). With the appearance of the money loan, however, the term became the general designation for any kind of loan or credit agreement and the debt (payment) liability arising from this.

interest reckoned on the money he had lent to the owner of the slave. Another very interesting case is represented in parchment No. 10 from Dura-Europos, a document from the Parthian period which contains a contract concluded between the Parthian nobleman Manes, son of Phraates, and a peasant named Barlās from the village of Paliga, near Dura-Europos. In return for a loan at interest received from the Parthian the peasant undertook to pay interest in the form of "service as a slave" (δουλικᾶς χρείας), that is, he gave himself as antichresis-security, while all the property belonging to this peasant was hypothecated, and in the event of his failure to redeem the debt it would pass to the creditor.

There was no line or barrier between the two types of loan; an interest-free loan could be transformed into a loan at interest if the debtor failed to discharge his debt within the stipulated time (*pat ẓamān ī nāmčišt*), or for other reasons. Such a transformation was often provided for in the contract itself.[1]

It is not possible to treat here in detail the very carefully worked-out Iranian law on sẹcurity. Suffice it to mention that security appears not only in loan contracts but also in agreements of other kinds. Thus, kāpēn, the *donatio propter nuptias* stipulated in a marriage contract is nothing but a special form of security, and in one of the cases cited in the Law-Book a hypothec over the profits of one partner serves as security for regress to him by the other partner in the event of the latter's incurring expense on behalf of their joint enterprise.

In Sasanian Iran there was yet another type of loan, which we know about from "The Law-Book of Yišō'boxt" (V, 8, §§1–3). In the Syriac translation it is called "a loan at risk". This extremely interesting type of contract is analogous to the "maritime loan" or "sea-loan" (ναυτικὸν δάνεισμα) known to us from Greek law, and the *foenus nauticum* or *pecunia trajecticia* of Roman law. Lending money to finance sea-borne and caravan trade was highly developed in countries where there was an active commerce entailing the transportation of goods over long

[1] Cf., for example, the agreement quoted in *Mātakdān* 38.13–17, for a loan without interest, under which the timely repayment of the debt to the creditor was secured on a hypothec-security taking the form of a piece of land together with a slave. In the event of his not settling the debt on time the debtor must transfer ownership of the piece of land and the slave to the creditor. The article envisages the possible case of damage to the value of the security through the death of the slave. In that event the creditor was given the right to choose between receiving ownership of the piece of land (the debt would thus be liquidated) or taking it as antichresis-security (until the debtor should have paid off his debt); the latter option was equivalent to transforming the interest-free loan into a loan at interest.

distances. The maritime (or overland-trade) loan was called into being by the absence in ancient times of insurance for commercial ventures involving extraordinary risk and large initial capital outlay.

In this type of transaction the debtor was a merchant who needed money to buy goods and transport them to a place where he could sell them at a profit, or a shipmaster or a caravaneer, who carried on trading operations which involed supplying goods to a distant place and who borrowed money in order to buy them (or received the goods themselves on credit). For loans of this kind the goods carried served as security (their value was usually a great deal higher than the amount of the loan). Owing to the hazards of travel in those days, danger of robbery, shipwreck etc., the security might perish *en route* through no fault of the debtor, in which case he was released from his debt. Thus, the creditor took a risk, but only for the period when the goods were in transit, since the debtor was responsible for any damage incurred after the goods arrived at the place of destination. Such contracts usually included a proviso "until arrival at the island of X", or "until arrival at the place Y".

Since the creditor ran so serious a risk of losing all the capital he had advanced, he was able to set, as a premium for the risk, a very high rate of interest. Both principal and interest were payable upon the goods reaching their destination safely. Like the Greek maritime loan (and its Roman equivalent – the Romans borrowed this practice from the Greeks), Iranian agreements of this type might be complicated. For example, the contract might cover not only the outward journey, but also the return journey with a fresh consignment of goods purchased by the money realized from the sale of the first consignment at its destination. The interest on loans of this kind was not, strictly speaking, interest at all, since it did not grow on the capital advanced while this was being used. Essentially it was a share in the profits from a successful joint trading operation by the creditor and the debtor. We learn from "The Law-Book of Yišō'boxt" that claims relating to "loans at risk" were not heard by the official courts but were investigated by a court of arbitration set up by the corporations or merchants.[1]

In business practice a contract of great importance was that which conferred a mandate or power of attorney (*dastaβarīh*). The commission

[1] In describing the principles on which the arbitration courts of the corporations settled claims relating to these loans the Syriac text uses the Iranian legal expressions *pasand* and *vehdātastānih*, i.e., "Rechtsminus" and "Rechtsplus".

entrusted to a representative designated by a contract of this sort might be one of many kinds, but it was usually defined in the contract. This might state: "I have authorized Farraxv to pay money in settlement of a debt of mine, and to redeem my pledge", or the mandatory might be commissioned to sell something or to appear as representative in court (*dastaβar*, also *yātakgōβ*) of the person conferring this power on him (*mātak*) and on the latter's behalf, but only in cases covered by the commission and for the period laid down in it. The mandatory was compensated for expenses necessarily incurred. A contract of this type had to be put in writing.

A contractual agreement could be cancelled at the desire of both parties and declared ineffective (*aframān*). With some agreements there was a period of three days, counting from the moment when it was concluded, during which the contract could be cancelled at the desire of either party.

The parties to a contract might be not only physical persons but also juridical persons, represented by their functionaries. For example the Law-Book cites the case of a loan contract made between a fire-temple and a private individual, the temple being the creditor.

6. LAW-PROCEEDINGS

In Sasanian Iran justice was administered in law-courts which seem to have existed not only in the chief town of each district (*tasūk*) of a particular province (*šahr*), but also in nearly every rural division (*rōtastāk*) of every district. This may be inferred from the decision of the *rat*s and *kār-framān*s of the district of Artaxšahr-Xvarreh, dated in the reign of Khusrau I Anūshīrvān (531–79), which is quoted in the Law-Book.[1] One of the paragraphs of this decision speaks of the setting up of judicial offices in all the rōtastaks of this tasūk and of keeping no more than four scribes in each of these offices. Besides the judges, senior and junior, and the magupats and rats, who also performed judicial functions, mention is made of such high judicial dignitaries as the *Gōr dātaβar*, "the judge of the city of Gōr", or the *Kāzarōn dātaβar*, "the judge of the city of Kāzarūn", and even of a "judge of judges" (*Ērānšahr dātaβarān dātaβar*) with competence over the whole empire. The courts also dealt with suits brought by non-residents, who were not obliged to make a journey to attend court, but could act through

[1] *Mātakdān* 78.2–3.

their legal representatives. Kurds were subject to the jurisdiction of the judicial department situated in the area of their periodical migration.

Judicial documents, such as for instance the record of the questioning of a witness, could be passed on to another department of the judiciary. For a document drawn up in one tasūk to be acted on by the court in another tasūk, however, a special postscript had to be added to it.

Lawsuits were settled either by judicial process (*hamēmālīh* or *hamēmārīh*) in the courts or by the jurisdiction of the magupatān magupat. The latter procedure was resorted to only in exceptional cases. Although several forms of trial and judicature existed, the ordinary one was the legal procedure performed in the "courts of judges".

After a suit had been brought, judicial process took place in two stages, beginning with the preliminary hearing before the judges. At hearing the parties stated pleas and a record (*pursišn-nāmak*) was made of their statements which had to be signed by the litigants. The parties to the suit then presented their documentary evidence and named their witnesses. The judge was obliged to ascertain the authenticity (*vāvarakānīh*) of the documents and the seals they bore, and also establish the identity of the persons (*hamtanīh*; *āšnākīh ī tan*), their sex (*narīh ut mātakīh*), their age (colour of hair, *siyāh ut spētīh*), name and patronymic (*hamnāmīh*) and permanent place of residence; the same identification procedure was employed at the trial of the case in relation to other persons who were in any way involved in the matter being investigated. If either the plaintiff or the respondent was acting through a legal representative, the latter had to present a document proving his mandate, before he could be allowed by the judge to take part in the case. After this the judge approved the case for trial and named the day when the court would sit to try it; a period of one year was laid down as the maximum delay permissible between the beginning of an action and the holding of the trial. Actions in respect of trivial sums and offences were not sent to trial.

The day of the trial, both parties, and their witnesses had to appear in court to make their respective statements and give evidence. Court proceedings were recorded, the record being called *saxvan-nāmak*. A curious detail of the trial procedure was that, of the two judges presiding over it, one was the "plaintiff's judge" and the other the "respondent's judge"; verdict for the plaintiff was pronounced by the "respondent's judge", while the sitting of the court was conducted by the "plaintiff's judge" (or vice versa). Possibly the judges also performed

the functions of counsel. When the court had pronounced judgement, the plaintiff (*pēšēmāl*) and respondent (*pasēmāl*) declared their agreement (or disagreement) with the judgement, and a judicial order (*framān*) was drawn up, binding the parties to carry it out. Each of them received a copy of the document containing this order, signed by themselves as well as by the judge. In the event of a prison sentence the judge handed over a copy of the document to the officer in charge of records (*dīvān-pān*), and the condemned man himself to the jailer (*zēndānpān*) and warders (or "policemen", *GZYR*(')*ān*).

The costs of the trial had to be paid by the losing party. Since the actions where things of high value or grave offences were involved required a particularly thorough investigation and documentary recording, they cost more than those concerned with minor values and offences. Costs were increased in the case of a trial "delayed" through the fault of one of the litigants. As stated in the Law-Book the minimum amount was two drachms (if the disputed thing was worth not more than 10 drachms), while the maximum represented 95 drachms (this being the amount of costs charged upon a man found guilty of a capital offence).

If one of the parties disagreed with the court's decision, he could appeal (*must garzītan*), and then a second judicial investigation began, conducted by a senior judge or a magupat. The only judgements not subject to appeal were those given in actions relating to small values or to comparative petty offences.

Should the normal course of a trial be disrupted through the fault of one of the parties, e.g., through the failure of one of the litigants to appear, or should two representatives of the plaintiff make mutually contradictory statements,[1] then by decision of the court the subsequent investigation of the case took a different form, namely, that of a "delayed" or "defaulted" trial. The judges ordered the party who was to blame for a "default" (*hačašmānd*) to deposit, for the duration of the trial, a pledge equal in value to the thing in dispute, and in cases of robbery, violence, etc., the amount of the fine was added to this pledge. Until the trial was over the thing in dispute remained with the *de facto* holder.

In the event of renewed delay, the party responsible was obliged to

[1] This circumstance made it necessary to subpoena the author of their mandates (i.e. the litigant himself) and put off settlement of the matter to a fresh session of the court, at which he must be present. Renunciation by a representative of his commission in the course of a trial, or the need to submit an additional document or bring a new witness to the court, had similar consequences.

deposit a further pledge, equal in value to the first. If a third delay occurred, the court gave judgement whereby the party responsible for this delay lost both the case and his pledges, which were handed over to the successful party. After the first two delays, the party responsible might still win the case and recover his pledge.

Cases occurred in judicial practice, however, which could not be decided through an ordinary trial. Such cases were assigned for settlement by way of ordeal (*dātastān pat var*). This was arranged and carried out by a rat, and not by a judge or a magupat, whose competence did not extend beyond the limits of a trial such as has been described. The forms assumed by the ordeal (*var*) in the Sasanian period were various, and they included oath-taking. That one of the litigants was subjected to ordeal who was recognized as the one having the advantage. A woman or a slave could not be subjected to ordeal (exception was made in the case of a slave if he had defended his freedom before the court, affirming that he had been manumitted). At the end of a trial of this kind a special document was issued, a "letter about the ordeal" (*yazišn-nāmak*). If a litigant failed to appear at this trial the court also adopted the procedure of demanding a pledge, as described above.

Unlike the courts of the *dātaβar*s and magupats and the rat's court of ordeal, the court of the magupatān magupat (to which, as has been mentioned, exceptional cases were referred) did not function by way of trial. The magupatān magupat judged the case without seeing the persons concerned, and "alone" [*pat tan-ē(v)*]. The judgement he gave could be reviewed by no one: it was regarded as absolutely reliable, "even more trustworthy than the ordeal".

A wide variety of cases came before the courts: suits concerning things, claims regarding liability, accusations of criminal offences, of witchcraft (*yātūkīh*) and of religious offences (the propagation of "heresy", *zandīkīh*). There were also judicial offences, such as false witness, making untrue or inconsistent statements. Among the methods of punishments imposed by the courts were imprisonment and death. The most serious crimes were called *mark-arzān* (literally, "deserving death"): those found guilty of such crimes, even if they were not executed, were deprived of all legal capacity.

Within the narrow bounds of this chapter it is not possible to describe all the resourcefulness of Iranian law and its degree of

elaboration, which was advanced for its time. It must be said, however, that although Iranian law was to some extent influenced by Hellenistic law (but not by Roman), it was very distinctive both in system and in detail. A comparison of Iranian and Old Indian legal (and social) institutions reveals a number of kindred features. It is scarcely possible to suppose that this is to be explained by borrowing; it is rather a manifestation of the close kinship between these peoples. Indian law, for which we have a wealth of documents, was at a very much lower level of development than Iranian law.

Though it surrendered its position to the primitive law imposed upon Iran by its Arab conquerors, Iranian law did not disappear without trace, as the reader has been able to perceive from the example of the waqf. The question as to how much of Iranian law was taken over by the Muslims still awaits study. Future investigations in this direction will undoubtedly enable us to understand better the part played by Iran in the formation of Islamic civilisation.

CHAPTER 19

POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS, TAXES AND TRADE

I. SOURCES

The written sources for the organization of the state in Parthian and early Sasanian times are various and heterogeneous. The historian finds himself dealing with two points of view which rarely coincide. The first of these is represented for the most part by authors writing in Greek and Latin (mainly for the Parthian period), and also in Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, Chinese and other languages (mainly for the Sasanian period). Thus, some sections of the history of the Parthian and Sasanian states are known to us only through "a view from the West" or "a view from the Far East", and it remains dubious what particular Parthian or Sasanian institutions a given writer had in mind when he adapted ideas that he did not fully understand to his own, alien terminology. The second point of view is represented by indigenous sources.

The sources in the Parthian language consist mostly of fragmentary epigraphic material. This principally takes the form of potsherds found by the South-Turkmenistan Archaeological Expedition to Nisā: the archive of a wine storehouse (*mdwstn*) in the 1st century B.C., containing over 2,000 documents which have survived to the present day.[1] A small number of potsherds, records of issues of corn[2] to the Persian garrison, have been found at Dura-Europos.[3] They belong to the middle of the 3rd century A.D. Some graffiti in various languages (including Parthian) were also found there, together with a few parchments in Parthian and Greek – contracts and business documents. In various parts of Iran, rock inscriptions of the Parthian period have also been found, in Greek (beside the Parthian relief on the Behistun rock), Aramaic (the stele from Ashur, the inscriptions at Tang-i Sarvak, at Hatra and elsewhere), and in Parthian (the stele from Susa, the inscription at Kāl-i Jangāl).[4] Three parchments (two in Greek and one

[1] The principal publications are: Diakonoff and Livshits, *Dokumenty iz Nisy*, *Novye nakhodki dokumentov v staroi Nise*; *Parthian Economic Documents from Nisa.*

[2] Henning, *Gnomon* XXXI (1954), pp. 478–80.

[3] Harmatta, "Parthischen Ostraka".

[4] Henning, "A new Parthian inscription".

in Parthian) found at Avroman, in Kurdistan, have become very well known: they are documents about the sale of a vineyard. Of great importance is the letter of the Parthian king Artabanus III discovered in the city of Susa,[1] while very valuable data are also provided by Parthian coinage.[2] Extensive epigraphic and numismatic material from the subject or semi-independent cities to the west of Iran (Palmyra, Seleucia, Edessa etc.) has also been long known.

In analysing these sources, at least three circumstances need to be kept in mind: (i) the fragmentary nature of the picture we obtain, since the sources do not throw light on all periods; (ii) the fortuitous character of the information provided, since the sources do not illuminate for us all parts of Iran in the Parthian period, and they reflect far from all of the political and economic institutions of that time; and (iii) the difficulty already mentioned in interpreting the information given, because we are dealing with material in a variety of languages.

The sources for the Sasanian state are considerably larger, though here, too, we lack a unified historical series, and the monuments are extremely disparate. Nevertheless, we have a much greater amount of epigraphic material for this period. It consists above all in the great inscriptions of the second Sasanian King of Kings, Shāpūr I, on the walls of the Kaʿba-yi Zardusht at Naqsh-i Rustam (ŠKZ),[3] at Naqsh-i Rajab and at Ḥājjīābād (ŠHjAb),[4] and of Narseh at Paikuli (NPK),[5] with the less extensive inscriptions of all the early Sasanian rulers, which accompany their portraits on the rock reliefs,[6] some inscriptions by Sasanian grandees, e.g., the *vazurg-framātar* Mihr-Narseh at Fīrūzābād,[7] King Shāpūr of Sakastān and the judge (*d'twbl*) of the city of Kavar Seleucus at Persepolis (4th century) (Pers. I, II),[8] the grandee Narseh in southern Āzarbāījān (4th century),[9] the scribe (*dpywr*) Apasai at Bīshāpūr (3rd century) (Šbš),[10] the tombstone epitaph of the daughter of

[1] Minns, "Parchments of the Parthian period"; Cumont, "Une lettre du roi Artaban III"; Welles, *Royal Correspondence*.

[2] Wroth, *BMC Parthia*; Hill, *BMC Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia*. For further bibliography on Parthian and related coins, see pp. 1299–1302 in this volume.

[3] Maricq, "Res Gestae divi Saporis".

[4] Nyberg, *Manual of Pahlavi* I, pp. 122–3, resembling text in Tang-i Burāq; see G. Gropp, "Einige neuentdeckte Inschriften aus sasanidischer Zeit", in Hinz, *Altiranische Funde und Forschungen*, pp. 229–37.

[5] Herzfeld, *Paikuli*.

[6] *Op. cit.*, I.

[7] Henning, "The inscription of Firuzabad".

[8] Nyberg, *Manual* Herzfeld, *Paikuli*; Henning, *Minor inscriptions*.

[9] Kāmbakhsh Fard, "An inscription of Shapur II," *Hunar va mardum* LXI–LXII (Tehran, 1346), 6–9; Nyberg, "The Pahlavi inscription at Mishkīn", *BSOAS* XXXIII (1970), pp. 144–53.

[10] Ghirshman, "Inscription du monument de Chāpour Ier à Chāpour", *RAA* X (1936), pp. 123–9; Nyberg, *Manual* I, pp. 124–5.

a military commander of the Suren clan in northern China (9th century),[1] the inscriptions of the *hamarkar* of Āzarbāījān, Būrzneš (?), at Darband (6th century),[2] and a number of smaller rock inscriptions, inscriptions on silver vessels, potsherds, papyri, stone seals, gems, bullae, coins, and so on. Of very great importance also are the four great inscriptions of the high priest of the Sasanian state, Kartīr (3rd century) at Sar Mashhad (KSM), Naqsh-i Rustam (KNRu), Naqsh-i Rajab (KNRj) and in the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht (KKZ).[3] Some information is also contained in the "guests' inscriptions" of Sasanian soldiers, travellers and pilgrims, such as, for instance, those in the synagogue at Dura-Europos (3rd century), in the caves of the Buddhist monastery at Kara-tepe near Tirmidh (4th century) or at Kanheri (7th–8th centuries). Extensive and especially valuable material can be drawn from works on Sasanian law, various religious and historical works of the Sasanian and post-Sasanian periods, and also from Arabo-Persian historical and geographical writings. To this must be added, as already mentioned, what can be learnt from a number of narrative sources in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Armenian and other languages.[4]

The difficulty of interpreting all these materials, already referred to in relation to the Parthian period, is perhaps increased by the great quantity of data available and the contradictory nature of them. Thus, it is not possible to cope with the history of the state organization of Iran in the Parthian and Sasanian periods without resorting to certain hypotheses, in an attempt to make a connected picture out of an extremely miscellaneous mass of facts, and one often has to have recourse to the method of retrospection.

II. THE KING OF KINGS OF IRAN. THE CONCEPTION OF ROYAL AUTHORITY

The sources which can be used for reconstructing the character of the king's power in the Parthian period (the conception of royal authority, the nature of the succession to the throne, the ideology of royal authority)

[1] *Kaogu Huebao* II (1964), pp. 195–203.

[2] Pakhomov and Nyberg, "Pekhleviiskie nadpisi Derbenda". For a full bibliography of Parthian and Sasanian inscriptions (to 1971) see Gignoux, *Glossaire des Inscriptions Pehlevies et Parthes* and bibliography to chapter 32(*c*), pp. 1390–91.

[3] *CIIr*, pt. III, vol. II, portfolio I (*KSM*); portfolio II (*KNRu*); portfolio III (*KNRj*, *KKZ*, *KNRu*).

[4] Christensen, *L'Iran*, pp. 74–83. A summary is given in M. M. Diakonoff, *Ocherk istorii drevnego Irana* and in Frye, *Heritage*.

are mostly written "from the Western standpoint"[1] and therefore it is natural to expect that they will distort the true picture, owing to the classical authors' failure to understand the customs of the Iranians or of the nomads (depending on the choice made between versions of the origin of the Arsacid clan), and their tendency to identify the terminology and the conceptions underlying these customs with the terminology and conceptions of the Greek and Hellenistic states. The "Parthian point of view" appears only fragmentarily and indirectly.[2]

The materials which enable us to judge what the conception of the royal authority was under a King of Kings of Iran of the Sasanian dynasty are incomparably greater than those available for the Parthians, but the retrospective method has to be used if we are to be able to draw an analogy between the conception of royal power under the Parthians and under the Sasanians.

The inscriptions on Parthian coins, which up to the 1st century A.D. bear only a Greek title and Greek epithets, do not answer the question about the system of succession to the throne, because until that time all the Parthian kings called themselves in these inscriptions by the throne name (or, more precisely, clan name) of Arshak (Arsaces). Up till then, too, there is a continual augmentation of titles and epithets in the inscriptions, as for instance: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΘΕΟΥ, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ, ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ, ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ, ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ, ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ, ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ. After the reign of Mithridates II the inscription is, in the main, stabilised as: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ. From the reign of Vologeses I (51–80 A.D.), at first occasionally and later as a rule, besides the Greek inscription a Parthian one also appears, which reads in fuller form (on the coins of Vologeses IV): *'ršk wlgšy MLKYN MLK'*.[3] The name Arshak (*αρσακ*) is possibly derived from *aršan* "man, hero" and is connected with the mythical Kavi Arshan, the archer-hero.[4] Inscriptions of

[1] The origin of the Parthian dynasty is described by Pompeius Trogus (Justin's epitome), and also by Strabo and Arrian, on the basis of late writers. A number of statements are also found in Isidore of Charax, Josephus and other writers. On the nature of the royal authority, on which scholars disagree, see Welles, "The Constitution of Edessa"; McDowell, *Stamped and Inscribed Objects*, on the adaptation of Seleucid customs by the court; Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*; M. M. Diakonoff, *Ocherk istorii drevnego Irana*; and Frye, *Heritage* (on nomad customs), and references given in these works.

[2] For a review, see R. N. Frye, "The Charisma of Kingship in Ancient Iran", *IA* IV (Leiden, 1964), pp. 36–54.

[3] Cf. pp. 296–8 in this volume.

[4] Cf. C. Bartolomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, pp. 203–4. See also R. von Stackelberg, "Iranica", *ZDMG* XLV (1891), p. 620; Frye, *Heritage*, p. 276. On the problem "Arshak II or Artabanus I", see F. Wolsky, "Arsace II et la généalogie des premiers Arsacides", in

the type of ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ, may be translated "king of the Arsacids".[1] The personal names of kings are used on coins (in Greek) from the 1st century A.D. (the reign of Artabanus III) and this almost coincides with the appearance of inscriptions in Parthian. In the documents from Nisā (1st century B.C.) we find mention of Priapatius (*pryptk*), Mithridates I or Mithridates II (*mtrdt*) and Gotarzes I (*gwtrz*), only dead kings being mentioned by their personal names, or a personal name being used in connection with a vineyard the income from which, it would appear, was being devoted to *pat ruvān* services. The personal names of the Parthian kings are also met with in Neo-Babylonian documents of the Seleucid period.

The varied and magnificent titles on the coins of the Parthian kings echo their international policy; all these titles and epithets are also found on the coins of the chief adversaries of the Parthians, the Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian kings. Until the very end of the Seleucid dynasty we see a sort of rivalry in magnificence of titles between the great monarchs of the East. This political emphasis is sometimes particularly obvious, as is illustrated by ΦΙΛΟΡΩΜΑΝΟΣ instead of ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ on the coins of Tiridates and by ΒΟΙΛΗ on the coins of the rebel state of Seleucia. This reflection on coins of the internal and external policy of the state is, of course, very interesting, but it is precisely this that prevents us from giving a simple answer to the question of the meaning given by the Parthians to such concepts as, for example, βασιλεύς ("king"), θεὸς θεοπάτωρ ("god, having a divine father"). The "priority" in the appearance of particular epithets on the coins is a question which will only be answered when it is established when the early Parthian coins were minted and which kings issued them. Thus, for example, the epithet θεός is found both on the Graeco-Bactrian coins of Antimachus and on the Seleucid coins of Antiochus IV, while the title θεοπάτωρ is found on the coins of Alexander Balas. The same can be said of other epithets.[2]

We can accept with an equal degree of probability the Greek system of ideas about the origin of the king's power,[3] borrowed by the nomad

F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, *Die Araber in der alten Welt* II (Berlin, 1935), pp. 370–8; Koshelenko, "Nekotorye voprosy istorii rannei Parfii" (Some problems of the history of early Parthia), *VDI* 1968. 1, pp. 53–71.

[1] Cf. Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 93.

[2] For conflicting views on the "priority" of titles, see, in respect of Seleucid/Graeco-Bactrian coins, *BMC Parthia* and Simonetta, "A proposito di monete Arçacidi con beretto satrapale", *Numismatica* XVI (1950), pp. 22–25 and in respect of Parthian coins, Koshelenko, *op. cit.* (without adducing additional arguments). See also D. G. Sellwood, *An Introduction to the Coinage of Parthia* (London, 1971).

[3] Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides*, pp. 11 ff.

Dahae from the Seleucid or from the Graeco-Bactrian rulers, or the Iranian conception of the power of the "King of Kings", adopted by the Iranian noble clan of the Parthians, who considered themselves descendants of the Achaemenians. The same applies to the idea of the deification of the king which we find in the coin inscriptions. The iconography of the coins does not enable us, either, to decide on the nature of the royal authority. Early Parthian coins show on the obverse a portrait of the ruler in national "Scythian" dress or in so-called "satrapal" headgear; in fact, all insignia on early Parthian coinage (especially on the obverse) seem to be connected with the satrapal insignia of Achaemenian times.[1] The *Rv* type is thought to have been borrowed from "satrapal" coins of Asia Minor, with the figure of Apollo sitting on the omphalos replaced by the figure of the legendary ancestor of the Arsacid dynasty, Ārish.[2]

Of the existing versions of the origin of the Parthian dynasty, the most reliable is now recognized to be that of Pompeius Trogus (Justin), according to which Arshak (Arsaces) was the head of a nomadic tribe, the Parni, who were members of the confederation of the Dahae or Dai. Having conquered Parthia, Arshak established a kingdom.[3] Arrian's version (according to which the Parthian dynasty originated from the local nobility of Parthia, power in that region having been seized by two brothers, Arsaces and Tiridates, who were supported by other noble clans of Parthia and used the nomads to gain power) and Strabo's[4] (in which Arsaces was a Bactrian who, "in order to escape from the growing power of Diodotus and his successors, raised a revolt in Parthia") are now regarded as mere legends.[5] The choice between these versions partly depends on early Parthian genealogy: according to Justin, Arsaces proclaimed himself king of the Parthians, and on his death he was succeeded by his son, also named Arsaces (Arsaces II), then by Priapatius and the latter's son, Phraates I, who nominated his younger brother Mithridates as his successor. The proof of this genealogy, and, even more precisely, of the historicity of Arsaces and the legendary character of Tiridates, is considered the key to the solution of the problem.[6]

[1] Dayet, "Monnaies arsacides à bonnet satrapal", *RN* 1949, pp. 9–26.

[2] E.g. J. De Morgan, *Manuel de Numismatique orientale* (Paris, 1923–36), p. 50, fig. 27 (pointed out by E. V. Zeimal).

[3] Justin XLI. 4. 7, 5. 5.

[4] Strabo XI. 9. 3.

[5] See pp. 28 ff in this volume for a discussion of the beginnings of the Parthian dynasty. See also Arrian, *Parthica* in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, codex 58, pp. 51–2; Jacoby, *Fragmente* IIB, 858. It is also necessary to consider Ammianus Marcellinus' version (after Justin?), namely that Arsaces was the leader of a robber band (XXIII. 6. 2).

[6] Wolsky, "Arsace III et la généalogie des premiers Arsacides", and "L'Historicité d'Arsaces I".

However, thanks to three memorial records found at Nisā (the ancient Mihrdātkert) of the accession of new kings, giving exact dates and naming their predecessors, and also to a number of Neo-Babylonian documents in which the Arsacid kings are mentioned by their personal names, again with exact dates, it has become possible to reconstruct a dynastic table of the first eleven Parthian kings. From the documents from Nisā come the following genealogies: (i) the genealogy of Gotarzes I (document no. 1760): *[ŠNT] I CXXXXX IIIIII 'ršk MLK' BRY [BRY Z]Y (pry)ptk BRY 'ḤYBRY ZY*(?) *'ršk* "the year 157 [91 B.C.] of the Arsacids, the king, grandson of Friapatak, son of the nephew of Arshak"; (ii) the genealogy of Sanatruces (no. 306): *[ŠNT IC] XXXXXXX 'ršk [MLK' BRY BRY ZY pryptk BRY 'ḤY BRY ZY 'ršk]* "the year 170 [78 B.C.] of the Arsacids, the king, grandson of Friapatak, son of the nephew of Arshak"; (iii) the genealogy of Sanatruces' son, Phraates III (no. 307): *ŠNT IC XXXXXXXX 'rš MLK'* [*B*]RY *np ZY* [*pry*]*ptk* [*BRY 'ḤY BRY ZY 'ršk*], "the year 180 of the Arsacids, the King, great-grandsom of Friapatak, son of the nephew of Arshak".[1]

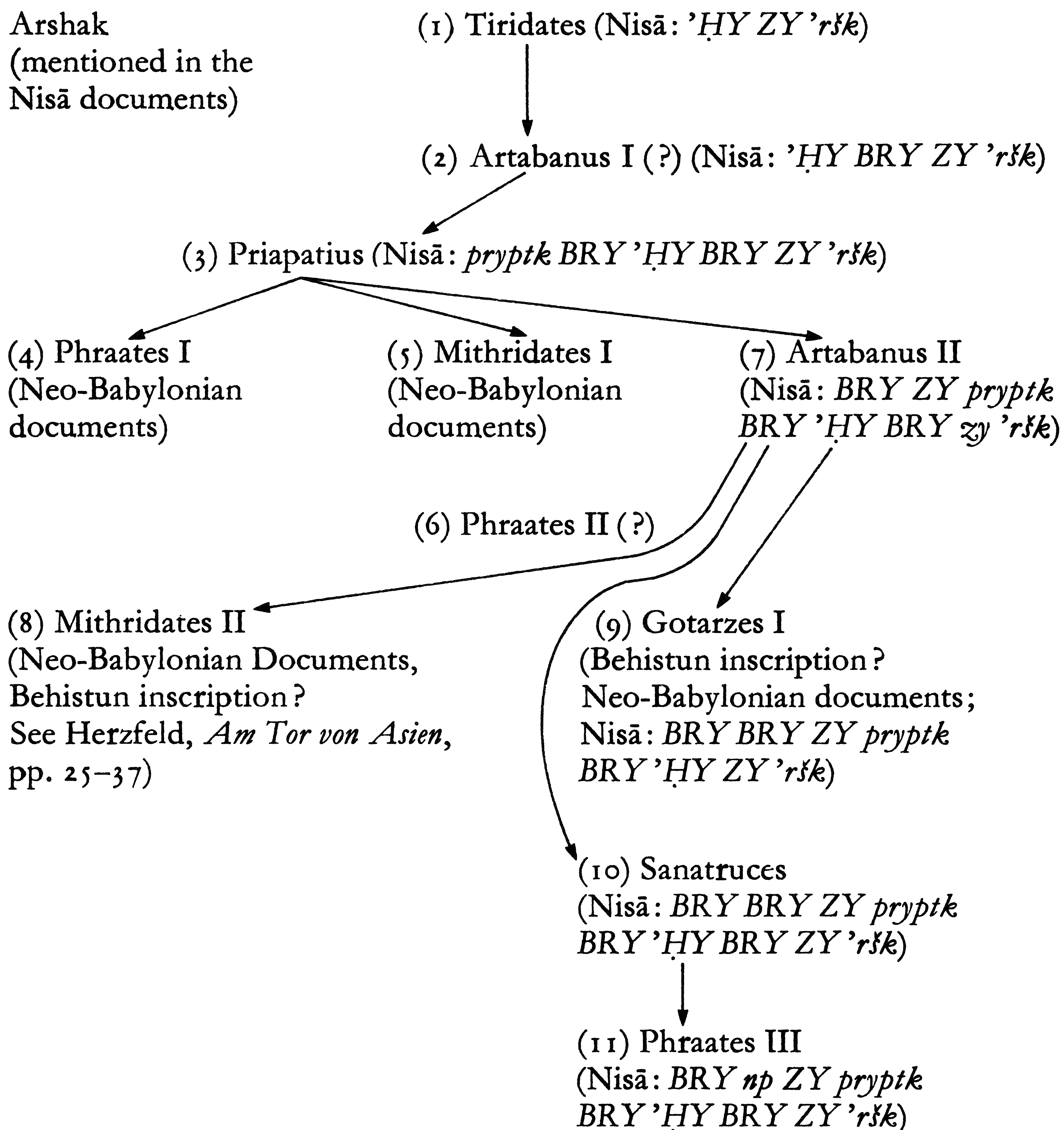
The genealogical table is shown on p. 688.

In consequence, Pompeius Trogus' version has been undermined at a very important point; regardless of what classical authors say, the materials testify to the historicity of Tiridates, which is also confirmed by the genealogy of the Parthian kings, and this compels us not to reject totally Arrian's version. The editors of the Nisā documents have already pointed out that in the 1st century B.C. the Arsacid kings carried their pedigree back to Priapatius.[2] But we must certainly bear in mind Wolsky's (and more especially, Neusner's) argumentation about the artificiality of Arrian's version which is constructed with the aim of linking the genealogy of the Arsacid dynasty with that of the Achaemenian kings.[3] Thus, the Parthian dynasty appears to have been local, Iranian by origin, and an analogy with the Sasanians is, therefore, to a certain extent admissible. It would seem easy to explain by this the Zoroastrian character of all the names of the Parthian kings, and the fact that some of these names (*gwtrz*, *hwsrw*, *'ršk*) belong to the "heroic background" of the Avesta. The editors of the Nisā documents have

[1] See Diakonoff and Livshits, *Dokumenty*, pp. 20–1, 113; *Novye nakhodki*, p. 143, no. 28, tables IX–IXa, X–Xa. For the evidence of the Neo-Babylonian documents, see R. Campbell, *A Catalogue of the Late Babylonian Tablets in the Bodleian Library* (London, 1927); J. N. Strassmeier, "Arsaciden-Inschriften", *ZA*, III (1888), pp. 129–58; Debevoise, pp. 1–28.

[2] *Novye nakhodki*, p. 144.

[3] Neusner, "Parthian Political Ideology", *Iranica Antiqua* III (1963), pp. 40–59.



The sequence is: Tiridates – his son Artabanus I – his son Priapatius – the eldest son of Priapatius, Phraates I – the middle son of Priapatius, Mithridates I – the youngest son of Priapatius, Artabanus II – the son of Artabanus, Mithridates II – the middle son of Artabanus, Gotarzes I – the youngest son of Artabanus, Sanatruces – the son of Sanatruces, Phraates III. Newly-found documents permit us to reject Bickerman's objections: his proposed genealogical table is not supported by Iranian (including Parthian) material (see, for example, the inscription of Khvāsak from Susa and the Parthian variants of early Sasanian rock inscriptions).[1]

[1] Bickerman, "The Parthian Ostrakon no. 1760 from Nisa", *Bibliotheca Orientalis* XXIII (Leiden, 1966), pp. 15–17; cf. M. L. Chaumont, "Les Ostraca de Nisa. Nouvelle contribution à l'histoire des Arsacides", *JA* 1968, pp. 11–35, esp. pp. 14–19; Koshelenko, "Genealogy of the early Arsacids"; [Cf. pp. 29ff in this volume.]

noted that "all the personal names in the Nisā archive, without exception, are purely Iranian; there are a large number of obviously Zoroastrian names, and not a single name that could not be borne by an orthodox Zoroastrian".[1]

At this point we must turn to one of the most important passages on the nature of the royal authority under the Parthians, which is to be found in Strabo (XI. 9. 3): "According to Poseidonius, the supreme council (*συνέδριον*) of the Parthians consists of two groups: one that of the [king's] kinsmen and the other that of wise men and magi, from both of which groups the kings were appointed". Supporters of the "nomad theory" of the origin of the Parthian dynasty naturally interpret this statement as proof of an element of clan tradition of the Parni nomads.[2] We can presume the presence of a "Hellenistic stereotype" in Strabo's statement. Strabo knew well the organization of the monarchy of the Seleucids, in which the closest entourage of the king included his *συγγενεῖς* and *φίλοι* of varying ranks. Iranian comparisons are also possible, however; for example, the "Letter of Tansar", a pseudo-epigraph of the 6th century A.D. tells of the "council of nobles" under the Sasanian monarch in the following terms:[3]

And regarding this matter that you [Gušnasp, ruler of Tabaristan] wrote to me [Tansar, the high priest] about, saying that it is necessary that the King of Kings [in the "Letter of Tansar", Ardashīr I] take counsel about it [the choice of a successor] with his chief men, advisers and wise men, in order that they may choose a successor, you [Gušnasp] are to know this, that we wish the King of Kings to be the only one of the dwellers on earth to be concerned in the matter and not to take counsel with anyone . . . He should write three letters with his own hand, and we will give one of them to each of his chief men: one to the chief priest [*magupat magupatān*], one to the chief secretary [*Ērān-dabīrbad*] and one to the chief military commander [*spahbad spahbadān*]. When the world is left without the King of Kings, the *magupat magupatān* and the other two are to meet and remove the seals from these letters and make their choice of one or other of the sons of the King of Kings. If the opinion of the *magupat magupatān* coincides with the opinions of the other two, they shall tell the people [who is to succeed]; but if the *magupat magupatān* is opposed to the others, they shall say nothing, neither about what is written [in the letters] nor about the opinions held by each of them, nor about the words of the *magupat* . . . The *magupat* shall privily consult with the *hērbads*, men with knowledge of religion and [religious] devotees and shall pray to God . . . And

[1] *Dokumenty*, p. 23; cf. also *Novye nakhodki*, pp. 156–7, with the conclusion: "in eastern Parthia in the 1st century B.C. a written copy of the Avesta, or at least some sections of it, existed". [2] Diakonoff, *Ocherk istorii drevnego Irana*; Frye, *Heritage*.

[3] *Nāma-yi Tansar*, ed. M. Minovi (Tehran, 1935), pp. 38–9; 2nd ed. (Tehran, 1975), pp. 87–8; M. Boyce, *The Letter of Tansar* (Rome, 1968), pp. 61–2.

when they make an end of this at the evening prayer, then shall they show preference to him whom God shall raise up in the heart of the *magupat*.

The "Letter of Tansar", it must be remembered, is a tract which was written after the suppression of the Mazdakite movement, one of the slogans of which was the destruction of Zoroastrian family law, and so the passage quoted (like the whole tendency of this work) is directed against the ideas of the Mazdakites.[1]

What we see in this excerpt is the verification by the chief *magupat* of the legality of the will left by the King of Kings (from the standpoint of Zoroastrian family law) and his discussion of this will in a privy council with the leading dignitaries of the state. It is characteristic that in the event of a difference of opinion (the officials would naturally express themselves at this "council" in accordance with the actual political situation and the likely immediate consequences of their decision), the final word remained with the high priest, that is, preference was given to Zoroastrian family law rather than to political considerations.

Though we have little information regarding the functions of the council of nobles at the Sasanian court in relation to the succession to the throne, we can nevertheless imagine how it was composed, being very much like the "synedrion" of Strabo.[2] The council of nobles included, besides the relatives of the King of Kings and the highest officials, also priests – *MLKT'n ḥndryčpty* (Parthian), *mwg'n ḥdrẓpt* (ŠKZ) *w'spwtl'k'n 'ndrẓpt* (Pers. II). If Strabo's account seems nothing more than a foreign adaptation of the actual institution and actual Iranian customs of the Parthians, going back to the Achaemenian prototype, this is explained by the customs of the Parthian kings, which were strange to the writers of classical antiquity and did not conform to the idea of supposed electivity and the role of the "synedrion": they threw bones from the king's table to the "respected friends and bodyguards" of the King of Kings, obliged them to prostrate themselves before the king, to bow to his statue, and so on.[3]

In order to deepen the analogy between the Parthian and the Sasanian conceptions of the royal authority, we must define the character of succession to the throne under the Parthians, which at first sight appears quite different from that under the Sasanians (the electivity of the

[1] Cf. Boyce, Introduction.

[2] Cf. the information in ŠKZ (in more detail below).

[3] Bickerman, "The Seleucids and the Achaemenids", in *La Persia e il mondo Greco-Romano* (Accademia dei Lincei, Rome, 1966), pp. 87–117.

monarch, according to Strabo). The genealogical lists at Nisā, already mentioned, the inscription on the "stele of Khwasak" from Susa[1] (*'rtbnw MLKYN MLK' BRY wlgšy MLKYN MLK'*, "Artabanus, King of Kings, son of Vologeses, King of Kings") which is dated 215 A.D., and indirect information contained in Neo-Babylonian documents – these constitute, in essentials, all the material we possess with which to check the statements of the classical writers. Nevertheless, among all the numerous palace crises and the fierce struggle for the throne, only one, it seems, brought about substantial changes in the order of direct succession. This was in the period of the reigns of Artabanus III and Gotarzes II. Though Artabanus III, who, until his accession to the throne, was vice-regent ("king") of Atropatene and, according to Tacitus, had family connections with the Dahae,[2] belonged to the main branch of the Arsacid family, his successor on the throne, Gotarzes, seems to have come from a collateral line. The inscription on his coins points to this (*βασιλεως βασιλεων ἀρσακου ὑος κεκαλουμενος ἀρταβανου γωτερζης*),[3] as does also the inscription on the Behistun relief which Herzfeld[4] ascribes to Gotarzes II (ΓΩΤΑΡΣΗC ΓΕΟΠΟΘΡΟC 'Gotarzes, son of Gēv"). This relief shows Gotarzes, on horseback, striking down an enemy with his lance, and Nike, who is crowning him. If we consider that this representation and inscription are placed next to the so-called "great" relief depicting several members of the nobility, it may be that Gotarzes is also depicted on the "great" relief. In that case, the inscription contains his title ("satrap of satraps"), which speaks, perhaps, of Gotarzes' exceptional position. The name of the Parthian king ("Mithridates") in this inscription has been *restored* by Herzfeld. In the same connection, Tacitus mentions as contemporary with Gotarzes II the ruler "Mithridates".[5]

In the 1st century A.D., as already mentioned, we encounter a number of innovations – the gradual replacement of Greek by local terminology, the appearance of Parthian inscriptions on coins, the statement in the Dēnkart that "under Ashkanian Valakhsh" documents were collected

[1] Ghirshman, "Un bas-relief d'Artaban V avec nscription en pehlvi arsacide", *MMP* XLIV (1950), pp. 97–107; Henning, "The monuments and inscriptions of Tang-i Sarvak", p. 176.

[2] *Annals* II. 3; VI. 36, 42; see also Debevoise, 152.

[3] Herzfeld, *Kushano-Sasanian Coins*, p. 5 reads APEANΩN thus insisting that Gotarzes was altogether unconnected with the Arsacids (M. M. Diakonoff interpreted the inscription in the same way, p. 394). The coins in the British Museum confirm the reading ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ (see *BMC Parthia*, p. 165, pl. XXVII, 2).

[4] Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*, pp. 40–1.

[5] *Annals* XI. 10. See also Debevoise, p. 41; Herzfeld, op. cit., p. 39.

and the Avesta was codified, and so on.[1] This is usually linked with the coming to power in Iran of the "junior" or "collateral" branch of the Arsacids.[2] It seems, however, that this internal crisis, like similar situations in the Sasanian epoch, produced an immediate reaction: Gotarzes, to judge by certain evidence, was murdered,[3] and already in the brief reign of Vonones II the throne was again occupied by the senior line (Vologeses II was the brother or son of Vonones I).[4] Further evidence is supplied in the continual attempts to overthrow Gotarzes and replace him on the Parthian throne by a direct descendant of the Arsacids – Mithridates or Vardanes. Thus, the changes which occurred in Parthia in the 1st century A.D. do not have to be directly linked with the events of the inner political struggle within the Parthian dynasty.

Finally, to the above facts which serve to confirm the patrilinear transfer of power in the Parthian dynasty may be added Strabo's statement, completely "Sasanian" in tone: "He [Phraates IV] knew that nobody could prevail against him without the help of someone from the Arsacid clan, because the Parthians are extremely devoted to this clan."[5]

We may now return to the analogy with the Sasanians. The genealogy of the Sasanians, which is preserved in epigraphic sources and also in historical treatises of a much later period, can be divided into a "historical" part and a "legendary" part. The latter was changed several times during the Sasanian epoch, in accordance with certain political and religious events in Iran. The "historical", or real, genealogy is found in all of the inscriptions of the early Sasanian kings, without exception, down to the reign of Shāpūr III, and is confirmed by inscriptions on coins and other material. It is quite clearly set forth: the inscriptions normally mention the father and grandfather of the reigning king. Palace crises and coups d'état were, of course, known in the history of Sasanian Iran, but analysis of them clearly reveals the nature of the royal authority in Iran in that period.

Between the 70s and 90s of the 3rd century, Iran was in the grip of the first of these crises. After the death of Shāpūr I and the brief reign of his eldest son Hormizd-Ardashīr, two other sons of Shāpūr, Bahrām and Narseh, contended for the throne. It is characteristic that the throne passed to Bahrām, that is, to the senior member of the clan and

[1] For new evidence, see *Novye nakhodki*.
[2] See Koshelenko, "Genealogy of the Early Arsacids".
[3] Debevoise, p. 174.
[4] *Op. cit.*, pp. 174, 99, 100.
[5] XVI. 1. 28; cf. the same idea in Ammianus Marcellinus XXIII. 6. 6.

not to the son of Hormizd-Ardashīr. Later, as a result of a bitter conflict between parties at court, and in particular through the activity of the high priest, Kartīr, who strove to put his own protégé on the throne in disregard of family law, the Sasanian throne was given to Bahrām's son, Bahrām II, by-passing the senior member of the family, Narseh. This led to a revolt raised by Narseh in 293, after Bahrām's death, under the banner of legitimism, for the restoration to the throne of the lawful ruler (the court party was trying to put Bahrām II's son, Bahrām III, on the throne). This example shows the role played by groupings and parties at court (probably made up of the members of the "council" of the King of Kings), their influence on the order of succession to the throne, and their aims, depending on the actual political and economic situation in the country; but at the same time it shows that such interference with the "lawful" order produced an acute political crisis. In his inscription at Paikulī, Narseh writes: "Shāpūr willed it that over Iranshahr this one [Narseh] should be lord, for he . . . after Shāpūr, was the best, the most just and the most vigorous."[1]

The opposite situation occurred in the second period of crisis, at the end of the 70s of the 4th century, after the death of Shāpūr II. The "eldest of the clan", Ardashīr II, came to the throne, but Shāpūr II's son, Shāpūr III, who took Ardashīr II's place, hastened to proclaim, in inscriptions, on a relief and on coins (that is, in his "official pronouncements"), the "legitimacy" of this event. At a later date, of great significance was the struggle for the throne that took place in the stormy period of the revolt led by Bistām, who was connected with the ruling clan, but in the maternal line, and the stressing of his right to the throne by Khusrau II, which is clearly expressed both in the Arabic translations of the *Khwadāy-nāmag* which have come down to us and in official monuments (coins, and perhaps the reliefs of the "great aivān" at Ṭāq-i Bustān).

These three examples – which could, of course, be added to – show plainly, together with the details of the "historical" genealogy, that the nature of the royal authority in the Sasanian epoch was governed by Zoroastrian family law. We are confronted with the procedures of a patrilinear community, as is particularly shown by the reckoning of ancestors in the male line, going back three generations.[2] This type of

[1] Herzfeld, *Paikuli* I, p. 111. For more details see Lukonin, *Iran, 3rd century*.

[2] Perikhanian, "Agnaticheskie gruppy v drevnem Irane" (Agnatic groups in ancient Iran), *VDI* 1968. 3, pp. 28–53. For further details of Sasanian family law, see chapter 18.

community, a union of families or an agnatic group (Old Iranian *nāfa*), was a completely real juridical institution in the late Sasanian epoch as well.

If the order of succession to the throne was, in general, the same under the Parthians as under the Sasanians, the nature of the royal authority was then also identical. As regards the ideological conception of the royal authority a definite similarity is also seen. The clan and family nature of the authority of the Sasanians is confirmed by the veneration of the souls of their ancestors and the customary *pat ruvān*, connected with the foundation of special fire-temples.

This institution is perhaps also indicated in the documents from Nisā, where some of the vineyards from which wine was supplied to Mihrdātkert were set aside for *pat ruvān* services. Among the names of these vineyards we find: *artabānukān* (cult of Artabanus I or Artabanus II), *mihrdātkān* (cult of Mithridates I), *fryapatikān* (cult of Priapatius), *gōtarzakān* (cult of Gotarzes; the vineyard is mentioned in the lifetime of Gotarzes, so that here we have a complete analogy with the ŠKZ inscription, where mention is made of the founding of temples in honour of Shāpūr himself, his daughters and his sons), *ayazan-nanaistānakān*, "belonging to the temple of Nanaia" (Anaitis-Nanaia), and *fravaši* (*prwšy*). Contributions for the requirements of worship are mentioned by the editors of the documents:[1] *'psyk* "tax on the vine of the fire", is interpreted as "a kind of church tithe, levied, apparently, partly in money and partly in kind". It seems that Nisā provides us also with the technical term for the revenue from property dedicated to the temple – *tylkpyšn* (Parth. *trkwpy*): document no. 198 has *MN 'TPH trkwpy Q*(*RY*), interpreted by the editors as "from 'TPH *of the one named* 'beyond the mountains'" (*QRY* is a restoration by the editors); no. 478 has *MN 'TPH trk* [*wp*], and no. 660 has (*MN*) *kwzr MN 'TPH trkwpy*, "from *kwzr* (name of a vineyard mentioned in a number of other documents) from *'TPH trkwyp*". The editors put this kind of document in a separate group with a different interpretation: *'TPH* (named), "from beyond the mountains" – bringing of wine from the "side".[2] The documents make mention of several temples, and also of a priest – *'trwšpt*.

In their official inscriptions (on coins and reliefs) the Sasanian kings called themselves *mzdysn bgy*. . . *MNW čtry MN yzd'n* "worshipper of Ahura Mazda, lord (*bgy* = Greek ΘΕΟΥ[3]). . . of the race of gods". When

[1] *Novye nakhodki*, p. 139.
[2] *Dokumenty*, p. 18.
[3] Cf. *prtrk ZY 'LHY'*, "divine ruler", on the coins of the Persids.

a Sasanian king died, he was added to the list of *yazats*; Kartīr in one of his inscriptions says: *W 'ḤR 'YK šhpwhry MLK'n MLK' 'L'LḤY'n g'sy 'ZLWNT.*[1] We learn from Ammianus Marcellinus (XXIII.6.5) that the Sasanians regarded themselves as gods – "sharers with the sun and moon". However, the Iranian idea of the divine origin of the royal authority and the deification of the king's ancestors was considerably more complex than the concept of θεός or δαίμων ("the divine soul" of the king) which is the expression found in Greek inscriptions of the Parthian period.[2]

In this connection, martyrological writings contemporary with the Sasanians provide interesting information on how the Sasanian kings were thought of by their subjects. In "The martyrdom of St Simeon Barsabae",[3] it may well be that we have merely a "western adaptation", just as in the view of Aeschylus (*Persae*, 156–7) and Plutarch (*Themistocles*, 27) Darius and Xerxes are declared to be "gods of the Persians", which does not correspond at all to authentic Achaemenian evidence. The Greek idea of the deification of the king was especially widespread in Seleucid circles.[4]

The Iranian conception of *mzdysn bgy* appears perhaps most vividly in the investiture relief of the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, Ardashīr I, at Naqsh-i Rustam. Here we see one of the first anthropomorphic portrayals of Ahura Mazda on a horse, trampling Angra Mainyu under its hooves. Ardashīr receives the diadem from the god, symbolizing the divine origin of royal authority. Ardashīr's horse tramples on his overthrown enemy, the Parthian king Artabanus V. Thus, in the language of transparent symbols, the King of Kings is shown as the earthy incarnation of the supreme deity, but not identical with it. As we know, in honour of his coronation the Sasanian king lit a fire (the temple housing this fire was called *'twr ZY MLK'* "the king's fire-temple")[5] and his reign was dated from that moment. It seems to be established that a similar custom prevailed in the Parthian period. There are probably no grounds for interpreting the statement by Isidore of Charax[6] about the

[1] KKZ, line 3.

[2] F. Cumont identifies the term δαίμων with the Iranian religious term *fravaši*; "Nouvelles inscriptions grecques en Suse", *CRAI* 1930, p. 217.

[3] *Acta Sanctorum Martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium* (Rome, 1748).

[4] On the ideological conception of the authority of the Achaemenian kings, see M. A. Dandamayev, *Iran pri pervykh Akhemenidakh* (Iran under the first Achaemenids) (Moscow, 1963), pp. 234–61, esp. p. 243 (German translation, Leiden, 1976).

[5] See for example, the inscription of Apasi at Bīshapur; Ghirshman, "Inscription du monument de Chāpour Ier".

[6] *Parthian Stations* 11.

coronation of Arshak at Astauene, and that in that city "an external fire is maintained", as meaning that a special fire-temple was built in honour of the coronation of the first Parthian King of Kings. Of greater interest is sherd no. 199 from Nisā, on the inner side of which is the inscription: *MN 'yzny prhtk* [*n*?], "From the temple of Phraates".[1] It may be that the temple meant here is one of the same type as the Sasanian *'twr ZY MLK'*.

There are many analogies between the "official formularies" of the Archaemenian and Sasanian inscriptions: we find in the Behistun inscription: "Thus speaks Darius, king by the grace of Ahura Mazda – I am the king. Ahura Mazda gave me the kingship." The first lines of the Behistun inscriptions are constructed in this way: (1) the king, the king's ancestors (lines 1–12); (2) the administrative areas (satrapies, kingdoms) included in the state (12–20; 17–20): "Thus speaks Darius the king: these lands were given to me. By the grace of Ahura Mazda [they] were placed under me. They paid me tribute." While in the inscription of Shāpūr I on the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht we read: "I am the worshipper of Ahura Mazda, the lord Shāpūr, King of Iran and non-Iran, of divine origin, son of the worshipper of Ahura Mazda, the lord Ardashīr, King of Kings of Iran, of divine origin, grandson of the lord Pāpak, the king. In Iranshahr I am lord over . . ." (here follows the list of parts of the country) "and all these *shahrs* [kingdoms] and their rulers [*shahrdārs*] and 'rulers of border regions' [Parth. *ptykwspn*] were subordinate to me and brought me tribute".

Considering the similarity between the Parthian and Sasanian monarchies, we may conclude that the political and ideological conceptions of the royal authority in both periods were based on one of the principal features of the Zoroastrian patrilinear community: the cult of the divine ancestor of the clan and that of the souls of ancestors in the paternal line.[2] Everything else in the conception of the royal authority can be reconstructed only through hypotheses. Thus, we may suppose that in the Parthian period the Iranian Zoroastrian conception may have merged with the Greek conception and as a result the idea of the king's person as being divine may have been formed.[3] At present, however, we possess no proofs to support this quite likely hypothesis.

[1] *Novye nakhodki*, p. 153, n. 68.

[2] A. G. Perikhanian, "Notes sur le lexique iranien et arménien", *REA* v(1968), pp. 9–16; "Agnaticheskie gruppy", p. 35; Perikhanian quotes the genealogies of the Achaemenian and Sasanian kings. For further details, see chapter 18.

[3] See, e.g., J. Neusner, "Parthian Political Ideology", *Iranica Antiqua*, III (1963), pp. 40–59.

The "legendary" genealogy of the Parthian monarchs also recalls that of the Sasanians. Probably from the very beginning, or at least from the time when coins were issued with a representation of the ruler wearing the so-called "satrapal" headgear, the Parthian rulers proclaimed that their clan was linked with the legendary hero-kings of the Avesta. Besides the name of the divine ancestor, (kavi) Aršan, this is witnessed also by the Eastern-Iranian heroic tales which were widely known in the Parthian period[1] and by some personal names of Parthian kings. In addition, as already mentioned, the version of the origin of the Parthian dynasty given by Arrian shows that it had been adapted in order to make the circumstances of the seizure of power in Parthia by Arsaces and Tiridates resemble those of the coming of Achaemenian power in Iran. Arrian also mentions that the Parthians traced their clan back to Artaxerxes II.[2] This idea of claiming to be the legitimate successors of the glorious kings of ancient times probably arose as early as the beginning of the 1st century A.D., or even earlier. Indeed, the documents from Nisā mention a vineyard called *artahšahrakān* which, in the opinion of the editors, "was probably named in honour of the legendary ancestor of the Arsacids, Artaxerxes II".[3]

The "legendary" genealogy of the Sasanians is similar to that of the Parthians. A link between the Sasanian monarchs and the Achaemenians is mentioned already in the first variant of the "Book of the acts of Ardashīr Pāpakān" (*Kārnāmag*), which appears in the 4th century. What is reflected here is the idea of family connections between Sāsān, the founder of the dynasty, and, on the one hand, the descendants of Darius, and, on the other, the ancient rulers of Persis.[4] Later, in the 5th century, the Sasanian Kings of Kings extended their genealogy back to the *kavi*s of the Avesta, thus including in their dynastic cycle the dynasty of the Kayanians. The inscriptions on Sasanian coins (starting with those of Shāpūr III) bear witness to the beginning of this process, with the introduction among the titles of the Sasanian king of the title *kdy* "Kayanid".

The more extensive "legendary" genealogies of the Sasanian kings are found in late Arabic translations of the *Khwadāy-nāmag* and historical writings connected with this chronicle. It may be that the interest taken

[1] See M. Boyce, "The Parthian *gōsān* and Iranian minstrel tradition", *JRAS* 1957, pp. 10–45; V. Minorsky, "Vis and Ramin. A Parthian romance", *BSOAS* xi (1946), pp. 741–63.
[2] Arrian, *Parthica*, in Photius, *Bibliothèque*, codex 58.
[3] *Dokumenty*, p. 20.
[4] For a more detailed consideration of the political circumstances that called this idea into being, see Lukonin, *Kultura*.

by Sasanian official historians in the eastern-Iranian heroic cycle at this particular time – at the very end of the 4th century and in the 5th century, judging by the inscriptions on coins – arose to some extent because this was when the Sasanians conquered Balkh, the birthplace of Vishtasp and the "holy land" of Zoroastrianism. It must be pointed out that changes in the political conception of the origin of authority in the Sasanian epoch were *synchronous* with stages in the development of the Zoroastrian canon. It may be supposed that as early as the 5th century, Sasanian official history began not with Sāsān (as in the reigns of the first Sasanian King of Kings, as we see, for example, from ŠKZ and the inscriptions of Kartīr), and not even with Darius (as in the reign of Shāpūr II, when the first variant of the *Kārnāmag* was written and the Zoroastrian canon re-edited by Aturpat Mihraspandān) but with the Kayanians, a circumstance which made it possible later to merge into one series the historical annals of the kings and the legendary history of Zoroastrianism.[1]

Thus we can conclude that both the Parthian and the Sasanian conceptions of the royal authority were based on the same prototype, which went back to the Achaemenians. The difference of principle between the Parthian and Sasanian periods lies, therefore, not in the conception of authority but in the character of the state, its social and economic organization.

III. THE KING'S COUNCIL AND THE CATEGORIES OF NOBILITY

A number of Sasanian inscriptions of the 3rd and 4th centuries describe the categories of the nobility of Ērānshahr. These categories are set out in a strict sequence. Of particular interest are those lines in the inscriptions which deal not with specific persons – dignitaries of state and grandees – but with the nobility as a whole. These are the following:

1. The inscription of King Shāpūr I at Ḥājjiābād (lines 1–6). The shooting of an arrow by the king is described, in the presence of "the great", and *shahrdārs*, princes, "the free" (*MT ZNH HTY' ŠDTYN 'dynn bwyny štldl'n* BR *BYT'n W wčlk'n W 'z'tn*).[2] The inscription is dated after 262, as is probably shown by the royal title – "King of Kings of Iran and non-Iran".[3]

[1] See further, pp. 388ff in this volume on the subject.
[2] M.Pers., lines 5–6.
[3] A more detailed account of the time when this title appeared is found in V. G. Lukonin, "Zavoevaniya Sasanidov na Vostoke" (Sasanian conquests in the East), *VDI* 1969. 2, pp. 20–44.

2. King Narseh's inscription at Paikuli (293–294).[1] Here are listed the grandees who formed Narseh's "party", supporting his claim to the throne of Iran: "and other shahrdārs and princes and great men and heads of communities[2] and free men, both Persians and Parthians by kin, and all [the inhabitants] of Iranshahr" (*W 'plyk štld' ly W BR BYT' W RB'W kthwt'y W 'z'tn W p'lsy W plswby MNWn BYT' W 'yr'nštry*).

3. The inscription of Narseh, son of Hormizd, about the building of a fortress (336–337).[3] Narseh expresses confidence that the fortress (*dzy*), which he built in six years, will be approved by the shahrdārs, "great men" and "free men" (*'z'ty GBR'*).

There are no similar passages in the ŠKZ inscription, but in the list of members of Shāpūr I's court and the courtiers of his father, Ardashīr I, the same order is strictly observed: shahrdārs (kings), princes, "great men" and "free men".

Thus, the Sasanian rock inscriptions, covering a period from the beginning of the 3rd century to the middle of the 4th, show us the following hierarchy and terminology:

1. *štldl'n* (M.Pers.); *ḥštrdryn* (Parth.); *MLK'* (Greek: βασιλεως) "kings", as distinct from the King of Kings.
2. *wspwtlk'n* (M.Pers.); *BRBYT'n* (Greek: τοῦ ἐγ βασιλέως): "princes".
3. *wčlk'n* (M.Pers.); *RB'n* (Greek term unknown): "the great, grandees".
4. *'z'tn* (Greek term unknown): "the free, nobles".

Later information, though fragmentary, essentially confirms the same hierarchy of nobles right down to the end of the Sasanian period.

All these terms go back to the time of the Achaemenians,[4] but in specifically Parthian written documents they are hardly to be found at all, which is undoubtedly due to the extreme paucity of material for this period. Pompeius Trogus, describing the customs of the Parthians, writes: "nearest to the royal authority [to the king?] is the caste of the highest [*ordo praepositorum*], from which they obtain their commanders in war and rulers in peacetime".[5]

[1] Herzfeld, *Paikuli* II; according to Herzfeld's listing – blocks B 1–5, line 2; 3, line 3; H 2–3, lines 1 etc. [2] *E'P'*, line 3; B 1–5, line 2.

[3] Kambakhsh Fard, *loc. cit.*

[4] Thus, in the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine; see, e.g., the letter of Baghavahja: *w-l-rhm ysymuk kdm drywhwš mlk' w bny byt'* in E. Sachau, *Aramäische Papyri und Ostraka aus einer jüdischen Militärkolonie zu Elephantine* (Leipzig, 1911), papyrus 1, lines 1–2.

[5] Justin XLI. 2

We are helped in determining what the Iranian term was for "caste of the highest" by Seneca's statement that the Parthian nobles and the heads of the noblest clans bore the title μεγιστᾶνες,[1] which may mean *mḥysty* + *RB'n* + *wčlk'n* "the great". Finally, Pompeius Trogus' statement about the Parthian army, which, though "mostly made up of dependants" (*servitores*), included during the war with Antony "fifty thousand horsemen, of whom 400 were free men" (*liberi*) (which is partly confirmed by Plutarch), enables us to identify the term *līberī* with the term *'z'tn* ("free men").[2] Thus, what Justin and Plutarch probably mean is that the army of the Parthians included 400 knights or *āzāt*, "horsemen": the Parthian *'sb'r*, "horseman", is found in the documents from Nisā, while in the Sasanian law book, *Mātīgān ī hazār dātastān* (A 16.1–17.1), we find *asabār nipēk* "a list of horsemen" and also special allotments of land "for fully equipping"(*pat ēmōčan*) a horseman (77. 6–9). There is also reference to the "free members of a community" who were "dependent" on a particular magnate (living in an area subject to his authority), and who were perhaps armed at the expense of this magnate, and his "personal bodyguard" of specially trained professional warrior-slaves. Therefore, neither Pompeius Trogus' expression "servitores" nor Plutarch's πελάται should be taken literally. Pompeius Trogus' statement that "their army is not made up of free men, as with other peoples, but consists mostly of dependants, and since nobody has the right to emancipate them, they are born to slavery", is most probably an unfortunate abridgement of Justin: a little further on he writes "there is this difference between slaves and freemen, that the former go on foot, whereas the freemen go only on horseback".[3] Finally, since all these terms and their definite hierarchical order are met with in the very earliest Sasanian inscriptions (already in the period of the reign of the founder of the dynasty, Ardashīr I), we may suppose that these categories of nobles and his hierarchy of titles existed also at the court of the Parthian King of Kings.

The actual content of these terms can also be established from documents of the Sasanian epoch. Below are examined the three ranks of nobility which apparently made up the King's "council":

1. *štldl'n* (= *MLK'*) (literally, "ruling a kingdom", "king").[4] To this

[1] *Epistula* IV. 7.
[2] Justin, *ibid.*, 2; Plutarch, *Crassus*, xxi. 6; xxvii. 2.
[3] Justin XLI. 3.
[4] The equivalence of the terms *štld'ly* (M.Pers.) and *ḥštrdry* (Part.) with *MLK'* has, it seems, been established from the context of ŠKZ.

high category of nobility belonged the rulers of kingdoms and large provinces of the state – *šahrs*. These were local semi-independent dynasties (mainly at the end of the Parthian period), or princes of the royal clan whom the King of Kings had appointed to various *šahrs* as his vicegerents (mainly in the middle of the Sasanian period).

In the 1st century A.D., independent kingdoms, subordinate to a slight degree to the central government (sometimes only by tradition) existed in Iberia, Armenia, Atropatene, Gordyene, Adiabene, Edessa, Hatra, Mesene, Elymais, Persis and, perhaps, Hyrcania.[1] The rulers of these kingdoms sometimes struck their own coins (often bearing very high-sounding titles),[2] and they carried on independent policies, now supporting the interests of Iran and now those of Rome. The process of the break-up of the Parthian realm into separate independent kingdoms went forward like an avalanche, leading to the situation at the beginning of the 3rd century which the *Kārnāmāg* describes as "240 independent states". The warlike efforts of the first Sasanian monarchs, Ardashīr I and Shāpūr I, which are described in early medieval Arabic writings and early Sasanian inscriptions, show that they had practically to conquer the whole of Iran.

Under Shāpūr I the only local dynasts of the Parthian period who are mentioned as belonging to his court are the kings of Carmania, of Adiabene and of Iberia. The other states had by that time already been conquered by the Sasanians, the local rulers removed and their places taken by sons of the King of Kings: Narseh, who ruled a newly-formed *shahr* (the boundaries hitherto existing between the kingdoms of Marv, Abarshahr and Sakastān having been abolished) which was called "Sakastān, Tūrestān and Hind up to the shore of the sea" (*skst'n twrst'n W hndy 'D YM dnby*); Hormizd-Ardashīr, who received Armenia as his appanage (*dstkrty*); Shāpūr, who was appointed king of recently conquered Mesene; and Bahrām, who ruled Gīlān. The title *MLK'* (*štld'ly*) was kept, but now it signified something different: the vicegerent of a *shahr* was the representative of the central government. This was, of course, not an innovation by the Sasanians; from the fragmentary Parthian material we know that at the court of the Parthian king the practice existed of assigning large areas to be ruled on the king's behalf by members of the Arsacid clan. In this case a high degree of centralization was achieved, but possible conflicts with the central

[1] Frye, *Heritage*, pp. 187–90.
[2] J. de Morgan, *Manuel de numismatique orientale* (Paris, 1923–36).

power were carried on to a higher plane, the vicegerents of important kingdoms waging a struggle for the throne of all Iran. An example is provided by the circumstances in which Artabanus III came to power in Iran, having previously been vicegerent of Hyrcania, or, for the early Sasanian period, the seizure of the throne of Iran by Narseh, who previously had ruled Armenia with the title of "great king". What, however, had been exceptional in the Parthian period became the rule in that of the Sasanians.

2. *BR BYT'* (*τοῦ ἔγ βασιλέως*). To judge by the words of this expression and its Greek translation, the title *BR BYT'* was not connected with any particular office. A. Pagliaro, like previous scholars, considered the term as equivalent to *vāspuhr*, which he translated as "prince of the blood, nephew of the king".[1] On the other hand, W. Henning considered *vāspuhrakān* as a substantivized adjective from *vāspuhrakānīh* "exclusiveness", with the meaning "special, exceptional"; thus *pus-ī vāspuhr*, "the special son", meant the heir to the throne. According to Henning, *vāspuhrakān* signifies (1) people especially close to the king (like the Seleucid *τῶν πρώτων καὶ προτιμωμένου φίλων*), and also (2) a special category of lordship – the "demesne" of the King of Kings, a meaning found, for example, in the inscription of Kartīr at Naqsh-i Rustam: *ZKm KN gwnky šhpwhry MLK'n MLK' PWN w'spwhlk'n PKDWN 'BYDWN 'YKt bwny BYT' ZNH 'yw YHWWN*, where *PWN w'spwhlk'n* means "relating to the crown-lands".[2]

We can evaluate the position of the *BR BYT'* in the later Parthian and early Sasanian periods only by analysing the ŠKZ inscription. This mentions the following *BR BYT'*:

(i) Members of the Sasanian clan (listed first in the inscription): Pērōz, Narseh, Rōddukht (Parth. *BR BYTH*), daughter of Anūšak.

(ii) Members of the court of Shāpūr I (no *BR BYT'* are mentioned as members of the court of Ardashīr I): i. Valagsh, son of Pāpak (either Pāpak, King of Persis, father of Ardashīr I, or Pāpak the *hazārapat*); ii. Sāsān, "foster-son" in the clan of the Farrekāns (Parth. *s'sn BR BYT' MH pty prdkn HHSNt*); the Farrekāns were a noble family, members of which are mentioned at the court of Pāpak, king of Persis (*prdk prdkn*), and King of Kings Ardashīr I (*wrpry prdkn*): there was a similar custom

[1] "Note di lessicografia pahlavica", *RSO* XXII (1947), pp. 63–4.

[2] See W. B. Henning, "The survival of an ancient term", in *Indo-Iranica: Mélanges présentés à G. Morgenstierne* (Wiesbaden, 1964), pp. 95–6. On other meanings of the term "personal property", see A. G. Perikhanian, "Armeno-Iranica I", *Izvestiya Akademiia Nauk Armyanskoi SSR* 1965. 2.

of giving the king's son to be brought up by magnates in early mediaeval Armenia;[1] iii. Sāsān, "foster-son" in the clan of the Kidukāns; iv. Narseh, son of Pērōz; v. Narseh, son of Shāpūr (Parth. *nryshw BR BYT' šhypwhrkn*: M.Pers. *nrshy BR BYT' d'tšpwhlyk'n*: Greek Σαπουργαν): if we read this as "son of Shāpūrak", then the father of Narseh could be the elder brother of Ardashīr I, son of Pāpak, Shāpūrak (*MLK'*) while if we assume that what we have here are *nomina gentilicia*,[2] then we must translate "from the family of Shāpūr" (King of Persis?).

From the ŠKZ it thus emerges that the term *BR BYT'* signified not direct descendants of the King of Kings (and still less, heirs to the throne), but persons of both sexes who were close to the royal clan and constituted the highest category of nobility, i.e., the kings, perhaps also children of forms of marriage "without full rights", such as marriage with a person in wardship, or collateral marriage.[3]

3. *wclk'n* (M.Pers. *RB'n*; N.Pers. *buzurgān*) "grandees, magnates". This rank of the nobility (as, apparently, also that of the *āzāts*, the "free men") was made up of the heads of noble clans, semi-independent rulers of small provinces, and persons who were in state service. In this respect, as already mentioned,[4] the categories of the early Sasanian (and, consequently, of the late Parthian) nobility were similar to the Armenian, as reflected in the so-called *Gāh-nāmags*. Probably those who were considered first among the "magnates" in late Parthian and early Sasanian times were the most noble clans of Varāz, Sūren and Kāren and the rulers (Parth. *hwtwy*) of Andigān. It is in this order that these magnates are mentioned in the court lists of Ardashīr I and Shāpūr I in the ŠKZ inscription. These "peers" (to use Herzfeld's expression) follow in the *Gāh-nāmag* lists of nobles immediately after the members of the ranks called *štld'ly* and *BR BYT'*. They are preceded only by the *bythš* (at the court of Ardashīr I – *'rthštr ZY bythšy*; at the court of Shāpūr I – *šhpwhry ZY bythšy*) and *hz'lwpt* (at the courts of Ardashīr and Shāpūr I – *p'pky*). The Greek part of the inscription gives only a transcription of these two titles. At the court of Ardashīr I, immediately after these peers, and at the courts of Shāpūr I and Narseh there is mentioned *'sppt* (M.Pers.), *'sppty* (Parth.) "the commander of the cavalry". Earlier too, in the Nisā archive several documents of the Parthian period

[1] Cf. Faustus of Byzantium IV. ii.

[2] See Perikhanian, "Agnaticheskie gruppy".

[3] [On the highest form of marriage, "with full rights" (*patəšāyihā zanih*), and other forms of marriage, see pp. 646ff in this volume.]

[4] Faustus of Byzantium, *loc. cit.* See also Frye, "Some early Iranian titles".

mention the "commander-in-chief of the horse" (*mzn 'sppty*):[1] this title may have been borne by a member of the Sūren family.[2] It has so far remained unclear whether *sp'hpty* (Parth.) is a title ("military commander") or the name of a noble family.

Later sources add to this list the noble clans of Spendiād and Mihrān, placing them so already in the Parthian period, which is in all probability not in accordance with reality.[3] To the Spendiād family belonged Mihr Narseh, the first minister of the Sasanian court under Yazdgard II, and to the Mihrān family the famous general of Hormizd IV, Bahrām Chōbīn, and it may be that these families arose in a later period and that members of them made up their own genealogies in order to emphasize the antiquity of their families. In the ŠKZ inscription mention is made of, perhaps, a Mihranian in one of the last places in the list of Shāpūr I's courtiers: *'ršt't ZY dpyr ZY mtr'n ZY MN l'dy* (M.Pers.); *'r̆stt mtrn pty prwtk SPR'* (Parth.); Greek ἐπὶ ἐπιστολῶν; "Arshtat, the scribe, a Mihranian from Ray" – the translation "son of Mihr" would also be possible.[4] Perhaps a more specific term for the heads of noble families was *ktkḥwt'y* (this would seem indicated by the order in which the terms of nobility are used in NPK), analogous to the Armenian *nahapetk' tanuterk'*. The *Kārnāmag*, however, gives a different identification: *ktkḥwt'y* = *MR'Y MLK'*, which is justified mainly by the context: *'ḤL MN mlg ZY 'lksndl ZY ḥlwm'yg 'yr'nštry 200 W 40 ktkḥwt'y YḤWWNt* (*Kārnāmag* 1).

In sources of the Parthian period only two of these clans are mentioned – the Sūrens and the Kārens. One of the Sūrens, who defeated Crassus at the battle of Carrhae, is splendidly described by Plutarch: according to Plutarch, Sūren was first among the Parthian nobility and it was his family's privilege to crown the king of the Arsacid dynasty.[5] Another member of this family, also close to the King of Kings, is mentioned by Tacitus.[6] As for the Kārens, one of then was the leader of the Parthian forces which supported Mithridates in his struggle against Gotarzes II.[7]

However, all the other clans mentioned in the early Sasanian inscrip-

[1] *Novye nakhodki*, p. 141.

[2] See M.-L. Chaumont, "Recherches sur les institutions de l'Iran ancien et de l'Arménie", *JA* 1961, pp. 297–320.

[3] Christensen, *L'Iran*, pp. 98–9, note 2.

[4] On the essential similarity of the lists of nobles in ŠKZ (names ending in *-akan* are understood as being *nomina gentilicia*, from the ancient Armenian *Gahnamak*), see A. G. Perikhanian, "Agnaticheskie gruppy", pp. 40–5; M.-L. Chaumont, "L'Ordre des préséances à la cour dex Archacides d'Arménie", *JA* 1966, pp. 471–97.

[5] *Crassus*, xxi. 6–7.

[6] Tacitus, *Annals* VI. 42.

[7] *Ibid.* XII. 10–14.

tions undoubtedly held leading positions under the late Parthian kings. The origins of the Sūren, Kāren and Aspahbed families are described in detail by the Armenian historian, Moses of Chorene:[1] Kāren, Sūren and Artashes, and their sister Koshm who was married to the "commander of the cavalry" (*spahbed*), were the children of the Parthian king Arshavir, who is usually identified with Phraates IV. By agreement, Artashes ruled the country as king, while Kāren, Sūren and Koshm Aspahbed received appanages in the east, in Balkh, called Pakhl by the historian, and so came to be known as *pakhlavuni*. This statement by Moses of Chorene hardly deserves attention[2] in view of the series of anachronisms, naive etymological constructions and generally artificial formations of "genealogies of origin", which are highly characteristic of his work. Besides these highly noble families, the lists of nobles in ŠKZ mention members of more than twenty other noble families. Among these the most important, judging by the position where they are mentioned in the lists, were the Farrekāns and the Vāspūhrakāns (Asparukans)

The leading positions held by these clans is clear, if only from an analysis of the lists of nobles in the ŠKZ inscription: at the court of Pāpak, King (*MLK'*) of Persis (*c.* 210–24), they mention a number of representatives of the noble clans of Persis (Farrekān, Asparuk, etc.), but no member of the "peerage" is present. Already at the court of Ardashīr I the Sūrens, Kārens, Varāzes and Andigāns held positions of great honour, ousting the representatives of the noble clans of Persis. In this instance there is a complete analogy with the appearance, at the court of the King of Kings of Iran of the new dynasty, of the kings of Marv, Abarshahr, Carmania, Sakastān, Iberia and Adiabene, mentioned in the ranks of the nobles holding the positions of highest honour. After all, the extensive domains of the Sūrens, Kārens and Varāzes must also have originally become part of the Sasanian state as semi-independent states: the Kāren clan ruled lands in Media, the Sūrens parts of Sakastān, and one of their branches ruled the area around Nishāpūr. Representatives of one of these ruling clans, the Andigāns (Sāsān at the court of Ardashīr I, and Narseh at that of Shāpūr I) are mentioned with the title *ḫwtw*, *MR'ḤY* (κύριος δεσπότης). The same title was borne by the ancestor of the dynasty, Sāsān, who, according to Arabic sources, ruled a small area in the district of Stakhr. More than

[1] *History of Armenia* II. xxviii.
[2] Cf. Christensen, *L'Iran*, pp. 98–9.

ten magnates with this title are mentioned in the Paikuli inscription, among whom are the "rulers" of provinces, such as *zwl'dčyn* (Zurad), *lšwmčyn* (Lashom), *syk'n* (Machelonia), *bwlspčyn* (Borsippa), *'nytwḥčyn* (Antiochia). These provinces were smaller than "kingdoms" and, like a number of the latter, joined the Sasanian confederation at the end of the 3rd century. The title *ḥwtw* thus bore a political meaning in the hierarchy: it was lower than the title *štld'ly*, *MLK'*, and magnates who bore it held the rank of *wčlk'n*.

To the *wčlk'n* also belonged state officials (in the later Sasanian terminology, *kārdārān*),[1] or at least the *btḥšy* (βιδιαξ), *ḥz'lwpt* (αζαροπτ), *'sppt* (ἀσπιπιδ). It may be that the satraps of the royal cities also held this rank. The highest offices in the state were usually hereditary, but in the event of his appointment to one of them a man was at the same time inscribed in the rank of *wčlk'n*. Thus, the very important religious figure of the 3rd century, Kartīr, having received from King Hormizd-Ardashīr (274) the highest priestly title "*magupat* (high priest) of Ahura Mazda" and having been invested with the emblems of this title, the tiara and belt,[2] only entered the rank of *wčlk'n* when, under Bahrām II, he became the king's "mentor in religion" and head of the dynastic temple at Stakhr. To judge by the KKZ inscription, this was the highest stage in Kartīr's career. Enthusiasm over his new position even breaks through the conventional formulations of the inscription: (7–8) *'whrmazdy W yzd'n W NPŠH lwb'n l'dy·ZKm BYN štry 'pltly g'sy W p'tḥštry 'BYDWN 'Pm g'sy W p'tḥštry ZY wčlk'n YḤBWNt*, "[In the name of] Ahura Mazda and the gods, and for the sake of his soul, this one [i.e. Bahrām II] bestowed upon me the highest position and authority in the country. He gave me the place and power of *wčlk'n*." It is interesting to note that in his Naqsh-i Rajab inscription (last line) Kartīr calls himself *MR'HY*. At this time Kartīr's full title was: "Keeper of the soul [confessor] of Bahrām, *magupat* of Ahura Mazda, lord (*p'tḥš'y*) of the temple of Anaitis-Artakhshatr in Stakhr."

The magnates who belonged to these three ranks of the nobility made up the king's council, with the right to speak in accordance with the system of "precedence". Each magnate had a definite place in the council-chamber, depending on his degree of nobility. At the court of the Armenian Arsacids, the customs of which were similar to those of the Sasanians and, perhaps, to those of the Parthians, too, each

[1] *Mātigān* A 25. 15.
[2] KKZ: *'Pm 'whrmzdy MLK'n MLK' kwl'py W kmly YHBWNt*.

magnate possessed a distinctive emblem of his rank; a *gāh* (throne), a *bardz* (cushion) and a *patīv* (a fillet of honour, or diadem),[1] and had the right to a particular place in relation to the ruler's throne. The plentiful figurative material of the Parthian and Sasanian periods (especially the reliefs) show that the nobility at the Parthian and Sasanian courts wore tiaras and jewelled belts as emblems of the titles and honours with which they were invested. The subordinate kings also sat on jewelled thrones, which were given them by the King of Kings as special marks of distinction.

The customs of the Parthian and Sasanian court are reflected, for example, by Ammianus Marcellinus in his story about a certain Antoninus, who fled to Shāpūr II from the Roman camp, during military operations. In return for his act of betrayal Antoninus was given at the Persian court "the honorific right to wear a tiara; this honour confers the right to sit at the king's table and to speak at meetings with the king and give him advice".[2] A gloss on the 11th-century source, *Naurūz-nāma*, where customs at the Sasanian court are being discussed, states: "A ring without a seal is a head without a *kulāh* [tiara], and a head without a tiara is not fit to be present in the king's councils."

If we now turn back to Strabo's passage on the "Parthian synedrion" we can make his statement more concrete by using the early Sasanian inscriptions. The following was the council of King Shāpūr I, who came to the Iranian throne within sixteen years of the death of the last king of the Arsacid dynasty; these sixteen years could hardly have seen essential changes in the customs of the court.

The first council – συγγένεια (τὸ μὲν συγγενῶν)

To this belonged (i) the king's mother, (ii) his brothers and sisters (namely, Dēnak, the daughter of Pāpak, Pērōz (*BR BYT'*) and Narseh (*BR BYT'*); (iii) his children: the four sons of the King of Kings Shāpūr were – the king of Mēshān, the eldest son, named Shāpūr; the king of Gīlān, Bahrām, later Bahrām I king of Iran; the great king of Armenia, Hormizd-Ardashīr, the future King of Kings; the king of "Sakastān and Hind to the shore of the sea", Narseh, the future King of Kings; and Atur-Anāhit, daughter and senior wife (*MLKT'n MLKT'*) of Shāpūr I (iv) his son's wives: mentioned are the wife of the king of

[1] Faustus of Byzantium III. ix, xi.
[2] Ammianus Marcellinus XVIII. 5–6.

Mesene, who was named Dēnak (with the title of *myš'n MLKT'*) and the wives of Narseh, Shāpūrdukhtak and Hormizddukt; (v) his grandsons and grand-daughters: Hormizdak, son of Hormizd-Ardashīr; Hormizd, Pērōz, Hormizdak, Otobakht, Bahrām, Shāpūr, sons of the king of Mesene, and his daughter, Shāpūrdukhtak); (vi) and also the king's sons (*BR BYT'*): two Narsehs, two Sāsāns and Valagš, son of Pāpak.

To all these personages, and also to those members of the family who were already dead – the ancestor (?) Sāsān, his son King Pāpak of Persis, the eldest son of the king of Persis, Shāpūr, his youngest son, the first Sasanian King of Kings Ardashīr I, his wife (the mother of Shāpūr I) Mardūt – and to Queen Horanzem of Stakhr (?) and her daughter Varāzdukht, who were connected with the Sasanians by family ties, the following sacrifices were offered: every day, one lamb, one and a half modii of grain (*lgryw 5 hwpn*)[1] and 4 *p's* of wine (the measure is not known; in the Greek text it is πασατας). These sacrifices were offered from the "surplus income" (*tylkpyšn*) from the herds, lands and vineyards which had been dedicated by Shāpūr I to five memorial temples, established near the Ka'aba-yi Zardusht (ŠKZ: *TNḤč PWN npšty*). These temples had been founded "in memory of the soul and [to preserve] the name" (M.Pers.: *PWN lwb'n W ptn'm*; Parth. *pty 'rw'n W p'šn'm*; Greek εἰς ... μνείαν καὶ ὀνόματος συντήρησιν) of the four sons and daughters of Shāpūr I.

The second council – τὸ δὲ σοφῶν καὶ μάγων

This consisted of kings (*štld'ry*; *MLK'*): Ardashīr, king of Adiabene, Ardashīr, king of Carmania, Amazasp, king of Iberia; the *bytḥš* Shāpūr; the *ḥz'lwpt* Pāpak; Pērōz, commander of the cavalry; Ardashīr of the Varāz clan; Ardashīr of the Sūren clan; Narseh, ruler (*MR'ḤY*) of Andigān; Ardashīr of the Kāren clan; the *framatār* (prime minister) Vahunam; and also, perhaps, the satraps of the royal cities. Later on, the *magupat* (high priest) of Iran took part in the council. During the crisis period, this council raised Narseh to the throne of Iran, as recorded in the latter's inscription at Paikuli: *šḥpwḥry ḥlgwpt, nrsḥy ZY BR BYT' ZY s [snk'n] p'pky ZY btḥšy 'rtḥštr ZY ḥz'lwpt 'rtḥštr swlyn rḥsy spḥpty 'wḥrmzd wr'č 'rtḥštr ZY tḥm š[ḥpwḥr ḥštrp]* ...."

[1] For *hwpn*, "handful", see I. M. Diakonoff, "Rabovladel'cheskie imeniya persidskikh vel'mozh" (Slave-worked estates of the Persian magnates), *VDI* 1959. 4, pp. 70–92.

IV. COURT TITLES

Hardly any information has survived regarding the organization of the court of the Parthian kings. We can judge of its magnificence and splendour from the casual references made by classical writers[1] and from archaeological excavations, for example, in the family residence of the Parthians at Nisā and at Marv, where remarkable halls of state have been discovered in the Parthian palaces and temples, decorated with paintings and statues.[2]

Some idea of the "protocol" of the Parthian court can be obtained from the example of court procedures at Edessa under the Abgars. Edessa belonged to the "Hellenistic area" of the Parthian realm (for more details, see below) and many of its customs were adapted from Seleucid traditions, which survived sturdily not only in the Parthian but also in the Sasanian period.[3] This adaptation (as in many other analogous instances) took extremely picturesque forms: the shaikhs of the Arab tribes which were settled around Edessa appear in official documents described by the Greek term *φυλαρχ-* and at Abgar's court are given the Seleucid title *φῦλα*. The noble shaikhs (with the Seleucid title *τῶν πρώτων καὶ προτιμωμένοι φίλοι*) were divided into ranks having the right to sit in the presence of the king and those who were obliged to stand. As under the Parthians, the Abgars had magnates around them whose duty it was to crown the king with his diadem. At the same time, however, other, purely Parthian features can be observed.

The Parthian court can also be visualized from the description of the "protocol" at the court of the Armenian Arsacids. This "protocol" was almost identical with that of the Sasanians. C. B. Welles[4] and R. Macdowell also consider that the Parthian court was similar to the Seleucid court, but this view goes against that of a number of well-known classical authors, such as Poseidonius and Philostratus. This is pointed out by E. Bickerman: "The people of Antioch gave the Seleuci and Antiochi funny names: 'the aquiline nose' (Grypos), just as the people of Naples called Ferdinand II 'Nasone'. It is difficult to imagine humour at the expense of Arsacides".[5] The organization of the Sasanian court is known in detail from a number of Middle Persian works, such

[1] Bickerman, "Seleucids and Achaemenids".
[2] For a description of the architecture of Nisā and Marv, see Koshelenko, *Kultura Partii.*
[3] Welles, "The Constitution of Edessa". [4] *Ibid.*
[5] Bickerman, "Seleucids and Achaemenids", p. 114.

as "Khusrau and his page",[1] *Ā'īn-nāma*, *Tāj-nāma*, excerpts from which have survived in Arabic translations.

Many court titles of the early Sasanian period are known to us in their Parthian spelling, which permits us to see the court of the Sasanian kings, famous for its brilliance throughout the East, as a development of the court as it was organized and as it functioned under the Arsacids. We know, for example, that many of the customs of the Sasanian court and of court etiquette were borrowed by Byzantium. By Diocletian's edict of 398, a royal crown, copied from the Sasanians (a gold diadem ornamented with precious stones), was introduced as the insignia of the Emperor.[2] At the same time were introduced the eastern customs of prostrating oneself before the Emperor and of kissing the hem of his garment.

Under the first Sasanian monarchs the courtiers were headed by a "chief of protocol" (Parth. *nywdpty*; M.Pers. *'dnyk*; Greek δειπνοκλήτωρ).[3] In late Sasanian times similar functions were fulfilled by the *'ndym'ng'l'n sld'l*, "the principal master of ceremonies".[4] The palace and the palace servants were managed by the major-domo (M.Pers. *plstkpt*; Greek τοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς ὑπηρεσίας)[5] and "head of courtiers" (M.Pers. *dlyk'n sld'l*; Parth. *drykns'rr*).[6] The latter title is also known in the late Sasanian epoch; according to Theophylact Simocatta it was equivalent to the title of "caretaker of the palace". There was also the title of steward of each of the various palaces of the King of Kings. Thus the stewardship of the splendid palace built by Khusrau I in the new quarter of Ctesiphon, "Antiochia-Khusrau", was conferred upon the famous Vazurgmihr, son of Bōkhtag. The titles of this famous magnate are mentioned in the *Yātkār-ī Vazurgmihr* as *ḥ'rgwpt*, *š'pstn*, *š'ḥry 'ntwyk ḥwslwby dlykpt*, "in charge of poll-taxes, eunuchs and palace stewards in the city of Antiochia-Khusrau". In the "Chronicle of Seert" the title *tačarapat* is mentioned.

Next in rank came the king's armour-bearer (*špšyl'ly*, "sword-bearer"): Faustus of Byzantium mentions a magnate of the same rank who is dressed in military garb, and at official receptions stands beside

[1] *King Husrav and his Boy*, ed. J. M. Unvala (Paris, 1921).
[2] *Chronica minora*, II. 149; Ammianus Marcellinus II. 69.
[3] This title is also mentioned, in ŠKZ, at the court of Pāpak, king of Persis.
[4] Inscription on one of the late Sasanian seals, see Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 45.
[5] Mentioned, in the ŠKZ inscription, at the court of Shāpūr I. In late Sasanian sources this title is not found, so far as is known.
[6] In the Greek text of the ŠKZ inscription a transcription of this title is given.

the king, holding the "king's sword in a golden scabbard, with a belt decorated with precious stones and pearls". Together with the armour-bearer was the commander of the royal bodyguard, the regiment of "immortals", who bore the title *m'dknpt* (M.Pers.; Parth. *m'dknpty*; cf. Armenian *gund-n matean*). The regiment of "immortals", an institution known also under the Achaemenians, is mentioned by Procopius, Theophrastus and other Byzantine historians as existing in late Sasanian times.

Also regarded as court officials were (i) the head of the palace security service and prison (*zynd'nyk*; τοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς φυλακῆς), a title mentioned in the Talmud;[1] (ii) the palace doorkeeper (M.Pers. *dlpt*; Parth. *brypty*); (iii) the head of the royal arsenal (*zynpt*); (iv) the commissary responsible for provisions supplied to the palace (M.Pers. *glstpt*, translated in ŠKZ as τοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς ἀννώνης; another title used for a supply officer, *mtkdr*, is encountered in one of the graffiti at Dura-Europos, being borne by a certain *Mnyš BRY Mnyš*); (v) the treasurer (M.Pers. *gnzwbr*), apparently an official of very high rank, according to Parthian sherds from Nisā, where several are mentioned;[2] (vi) the equerry (*'ḥwrpt*, translated in ŠKZ as τοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς πάθνης); (vii) the chief huntsman (*nhčyrpt*, translated as τοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ κυνηγίου; the Talmud contains a borrowing from Middle Persian, *naḥčirkan*); (viii) the cup-bearer (M.Pers. *md'l*; Parth. *mdkdr*; translated as τοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ οἴνου; the documents from Nisā give *hwrybr*, "head cup-bearer", and the Parthian form of the title, *mdwdr*, is also found).[3]

In the Greek version of ŠKZ the translator could not find appropriate equivalents for such titles as *plstkpt* and *dlyk'n sld'r*, whereas, for example, the title *prmt'r* is rendered as ἐπίτροπος, a word found in the inscription of 267 from Palmyra equated with Aramaic *rb trbṣ*, a local official of similar rank;[4] and the title *w'č'lpt* is rendered as ἀγορανόμος, equated with Aramaic *rb šwg* in Palmyra in the 1st century A.D. Perhaps this again testifies to the difference between the Parthian (and early Sasanian) court and that of the Seleucids.

An interesting office was that of the special scribe whose duties included, besides composing the king's letters and records of his instructions and orders, keeping a diary of the king's deeds and sayings. It is known that the compiling of such records by a special person was a

[1] See S. Telegdi, "Essai sur la phonétique des emprunts iraniens en araméen talmudique", *JA* CCXXVI (1935), pp. 177–256.
[2] *Dokumenty*, p. 19.
[3] "Mitteliranisch", p. 65.
[4] *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, part II, vol. III (Paris, 1926), nos. 3940–1.

practice of the Achaemenian court[1] and the courts of the Hellenistic period. In one of the sources it is said of Edessa that there, under Abgar, "and in all the other places ruled by King Abgar, all that the king orders and all that is said in his presence is written down [by his secretary] and kept in the archives".[2] In the late Sasanian epoch, as we learn from Balādhurī, the orders and decisions given by the King of Kings were recorded in his presence by the royal secretary, and another official entered them in his diary, which was checked every month, sealed with the royal seal and kept in the archives.[3]

A large part was played in the life of both the Parthian and Sasanian courts by singers, versifiers and reciters of legends (*gōsāns*).

The "women's quarter" of the palace was presided over by the king's senior wife, who bore the title "Queen of Queens" (*MLKT'n MLKT'*). In ŠKZ this title is used when mentioning Dēnak, the sister and wife of Ardashīr I, and Āturanāhīt, the daughter and wife of Shāpūr I. Among Parthian sources, a similar title is found on the coins of Phraataces, with a portrait of his mother and wife, Musa. It is probably Ardashīr I's wife, Dēnak, who is depicted on an amethyst in the Hermitage collection.[4] The inscription on the intaglio, though defective in the last line, runs: *dynky MLKT'n MLKT' mhysty PWN tny š'pstn*. Henning suggested translating this as "Ober-Leib-Eunuchen",[5] assuming that the seal belonged to (or had depicted on it) Dēnak, "the mistress of the eunuchs". However, the insignia in the portrait are undoubtedly those of the Queen of Queens. In addition, the title *š'pstn* (Parth. *špystn*) was given to very important state officials. It may be, nevertheless, that the passage should be read as *mḥysty PWN tny š'pst'n*, "mistress over *tny š'pst'n*" (i.e., over the dwellers in the harem): the reading *š'pstn* is also possible and would mean "over the eunuchs". Then the whole inscription would be understood as the complete title of the Queen of Queens Dēnak.

The wives of the king's sons and of the rulers of *shahrs* bore the title of "queen" or "lady". For instance, Dēnak was the wife of a son of Shāpūr I, King Shāpūr of Mesene; Shāpūrdukht was the wife (perhaps also the sister) of another son of Shāpūr I, Narseh, King of Sakastān, her title being *skn MLKT'*. The title "lady" designated also the junior

[1] Thus, for example, Ctesias (Diodorus II. 32. 4) used as a source "(βασιλικαὶ) διφθέραι) *ἐν αἷς οἱ Πέρσαι τὰς παλαιὰς πράξεις κατά τινα νόμον εἷχον συντεταγμένας*".
[2] Welles, "The Constitution of Edessa".
[3] Balādhurī, *Liber expugnationis regionum*, ed. de Goeje (Leiden, 1866), p. 464.
[4] Borisov and Lukonin, *Sasanidskie gemmy*, p. 48.
[5] "Mitteliranisch", p. 45.

wives of the King of Kings and those of the kings of various *shahrs*. Mardūt (*MR'TH*) the mother of Shāpūr I was the junior (in rank) wife of Ardashīr I; Narsēdukht was the junior wife (and perhaps also the daughter) of Narseh, King of Sakastān (with the title *skn MR'TH*); while Pāpak's mother, Dēnak, the wife of Sāsān, founder of the dynasty (Sāsān's title was *MR'HY*; Pāpak's *MLK'*), who still figures at the court of her grandson Ardashīr I (in one of the first positions) bore no title at all.

The title of eunuch (Parth. *špystn*) was a very high one, especially in the late Sasanian period. It was bestowed on important magnates: it is mentioned, for example, in P. Dura 20.4[1] (128 B.C.), as the title of one Phraates, who was at the same time *arkapat* (ἀρκαπάτης: on the meaning of this title, see below). The title of "eunuch" was borne, among others, by Vazurgmihr, prime minister at the court of Khusrau I, and the magnate Māhān (6th century), who also bore, *inter alia*, the titles of "head of the cultivators" and "counsellor of the court".[2]

We have no information about the place occupied at the court of the Parthian ruler by the Zoroastrian priests, since the part played by Zoroastrianism in the Parthian state has not been entirely clarified. At the Sasanian court, when Zoroastrianism had become the state religion, their role was, in any case, an outstanding one. Priests were the mentors of the King of Kings, the Queens, the "ladies": at the early Sasanian court there were titles of *MLKT'n ḫndẓpty* (Parth.) "adviser of the Queens" and *b'nykn ḫndryčpt* (M.Pers.) "mentor of the ladies".

V. CITY STATES AND THEIR ADMINISTRATION[3]

It is well known that the Seleucid epoch in the history of Iran was marked by the establishment of a number of cities of the *polis* type. The privileges of a polis were given to military camps, rural military settlements or ancient urban centres and temple communities. On the territory of the Iranian satrapies were founded Antiochia in Persis, the three Seleucias in Elymais, and Laodicea in Media (Nihāvand). Lands were assigned to these cities, from the estates of the "King's land".[4] Some especially important cities of the Seleucid realm were treated by the Seleucids as "allies", and had extensive freedom in external relations, with the right to grant asylum and the right to coin their own money.

[1] Welles, *Parchments*, 115.
[2] Inscription on an intaglio; Borisov and Lukonin, *op. cit.*, p. 48, no. 46, plate III.
[3] See also pp. 9 and 821 ff.
[4] V. A. Tcherikover, *Die hellenistischen Städtegründungen* (Leipzig, 1927).

The administrative organization of such towns is well known,[1] and the reasons why they were founded: the central authority, while granting autonomy to the cities, nevertheless retained its right to decide important questions of foreign policy; the Seleucid monarchs, in assigning large tracts of land to the cities, exacted tribute (*φόρος*) from them and imposed on them, so to speak, the duty of seeing to the cultivation of these tracts and collecting the taxes due from them. Royal officials (*ἐπιστάται*), usually appointed by the king from among the local nobility, supervised the local administration in the cities. Thus, politically, economically and socially the polis system was an important pillar of the Seleucid monarch's power.

We know that this system was not something totally unprecedented in the East. At the time of Alexander's conquest, a number of ancient cities and temple communities of the East already possessed an essentially similar structure, which had appeared quite independently and included some specific features.[2] The local inhabitants sometimes had their own independent organization (*πολίτευμα*)[3] within the polis; ethnic factors had no essential significance in this matter.

This policy on the part of the Seleucids, as also, later on, the persistent efforts made by Rome in the same direction, resulted in the creation of unity amid the extraordinary medley of kingdoms and lordships in the east. This unity had been attained to a certain degree in the economically more developed areas of Mesopotamia at the time when the Parthian armies reached them. The situation was different in Iran. Cities of the polis type were very rare there: huge areas of land were ruled by long-established dynasts who were independent or semi-independent (Media, Atropatene, Persis, Carmania, etc.). In addition there were the estates of the old nobility of Iran. The far-flung state of the Parthians, therefore, was made up, so to speak, of three very different parts: Semitic Mesopotamia, with a substantial urban population, united by the polis system, with Greek law and Seleucid governmental institutions; a number of independent states (in Mesopotamia and on all the frontiers of Iran), where this system and these institutions, if they existed at all, were very superficial; and the heartlands of Parthia (the east and north-east of Iran). Though there were, of course, no clear-cut frontiers

[1] Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History* II.

[2] G. H. Sarkisyan, "Samoupravlyayushchiisya gorod selevkidskoi Vavilonii" (The self-governing city in Seleucid Babylonia), *VDI* 1952. 1, pp. 68–83; A. G. Perikhanian, *Khramovye ob'edineniya Maloi Azii i Armenii* (Temple groups in Asia Minor and Armenia) (Moscow, 1952).

[3] For instance, Seleucia, etc. On the character of the cities under the Seleucids, see also M. M. Diakonoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 167–73.

between these different regions, the fact that they existed affected politics, economics and culture alike.[1]

Study of the fragmentary material from the Parthian period in the Mesopotamian areas shows that when the Parthian kings conquered them they left their political system unchanged, and likewise many civic institutions, not venturing to break up the unity that had been established.[2] This unity, however, was not uniformity.[3] Each of the cities of Mesopotamia, like each of the small states that came within the sphere of their political influence, experienced a distinct fate and had its own tendencies of development.

We know best, from plentiful epigraphic material and archaeological remains, the city of Dura-Europos, on the Euphrates, which was transformed by Seleucus from a rural military settlement into a polis and for a long time served military purposes but which already in the 1st century A.D. had become a mercantile city, the whole life of which depended on the transit and caravan trade. It was very closely linked with Palmyra (there was a large colony of Palmyrenes in Dura-Europos), but once the caravan trade began to decline, the city's life almost perished. Edessa's fate was different: founded by Seleucus on the site of a small settlement called Urha, as a Macedonian colony, Edessa developed eventually into the centre of an independent state, headed by the Arab dynasty of the Abgars. The greatest caravan centre of Mesopotamia, Palmyra, also became during the 3rd century the capital of the state of Odenathus and Zenobia. The polis of "Seleucia on the Tigris", which in the 1st century A.D. had about 600,000 inhabitants, practically lost its autonomy after rebelling against Parthian rule. With the passage of time the cities changed their personality, and their populations also changed. "Just as plants and animals change under the influence of the soil on which they grow, so the Macedonians were transformed into Syrians, Parthians and Egyptians."[4]

A brief account of the cities of Mesopotamia may give some idea of the processes generally at work in this region of Parthian Iran. It is not for this chapter, however, to provide a detailed description of the organization of the self-governing cities of the Hellenistic period.

Among the names of several urban magistracies we meet a number of Greek terms, transcribed in the documents in the local languages, which shows that they have a technical meaning. Many of these terms

[1] G. Widengren, *Iranisch-Semitische Kulturbegegnungen in parthischer Zeit* (Cologne, 1960).

[2] E.g., McDowell, *Coins from Seleucia on the Tigris*, p. 220.

[3] Classical writers distinguish between "Greek" and "Parthian" ("barbarian") cities in Mesopotamia; see Tscherikover, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

[4] Livy XXXVIII. 17. 10.

are entirely Seleucid, but in such cases what we see is not a foreign adaptation of local concepts but the actual system that prevailed in the cities in the Parthian period of their existence, or at least under the early Arsacids.

During the Parthian period, Dura-Europos was one of the principal points for the transit trade with the East. The population of this city was exceptionally variegated: there were Syrians, Babylonians, Nabataeans, Jews, Macedonians, Greeks, Arabs and Iranians; Tacitus called it a "barbarianized city". The language of contracts, business documents, and official reports was mainly Greek, with many Aramaicisms, a distinct *koiné*, as everywhere in Mesopotamia. All contracts were drawn up in accordance with Greek legal norms and the Greek system of setting out documents (*scripta interiora* and *scripta exteriora*).[1] The city was the administrative centre of a large area,[2] which was assigned to it as a tax-district, called λιμήν in the Palmyrene inscriptions.[3] Here all business dealings were registered by a special official, the chreophylact. Under the Seleucids there was a municipal council, whose members mostly bore Semitic names. No documents of the Parthian period have been found that mention a municipal council, and archaeological excavations have shown that in the Parthian period the *agora* was built up with shops. Nor is anything known from the inscriptions about the different races. Several places of worship have been excavated, dedicated to a variety of gods, including Christian churches and synagogues. Many of these places were built by private means. The largest of them were the temple of the gods of Palmyra (the centre of worship for the Palmyrene merchant community), the temple of Artemis-Nanaia (probably the centre for worship by some Greek families), the temple of Zeus Kyrios, and others. A characteristic feature of Dura-Europos is the absence of temples of gods of the city itself, or sanctuaries of separate races (φῦλα).[4]

Throughout the entire Parthian period the founder of the city, Seleucus I, was held in honour. Especially striking is the retention of

[1] M. I. Rostovtzeff, "Seleucid Babylonia", *YCS* III (1932), pp. 5–25. The most recent work on the system of drawing up documents in the east is R. N. Frye, "The Use of Clay Sealings in Sasanian Iran", in *Proceedings of the 1st International Congress of Iranologists*, Tehran, September 1966.

[2] Cf., e.g., P. Dura 25 in Welles, *Parchments*, 126–41; C. B. Welles, "Die zivilen Archive in Dura", in W. Otto and L. Wenger (eds), *Papyri und Altertumswissenschaft* (Münchener Beiträge zu Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte 19, Munich, 1934), pp. 379–80.

[3] Rostovtzeff, "Seleucid Babylonia", 80.

[4] M. I. Rostovtzeff, "Dura and the problem of Parthian art", *YCS* v (1935), pp. 155–304.

the leading urban magistracies by "εὐρωπαῖοι", i.e., Macedonians, right down to the end of the city's existence. As in all the Seleucid cities, Dura-Europos was headed by a *strategos* and *epistates* from the local nobility, from the Macedonian family of Lysias, an elective office (strategos) and a state appointment (epistates) being combined in one person. Seleucus, son of Lysias, was strategos and epistates in 50 A.D. and strategos and genarch in 61–2; Lysias, son of Lysias, grandson of Seleucus, was strategos and epistates in 136, and so on. The Lysias family owned large landed estates in the "city district", which included a vineyard in the village of Nabagaf.[1] The representatives of this family called themselves, as under the Seleucids, "first and most honoured friends and bodyguards".[2] Exactly the same title was adopted by other high officials.[3] We are here, of course, dealing with noble titles which had become traditional in the polis, and not with any sort of official titles related to the Parthian court. Thus, the tendency of the city's development is not shown in the names of the city magistracies, or changes in its juridical status. But it does appear, for example, in the fate of the daughter of the strategos and epistates of Dura-Europos named Seleucus, son of Lysias, who was known as Timonessa: a contract has survived which shows that Timonessa, having borrowed money from Nicanor, son of Xenocrates and grandson of Addaeus, that is, from a Syrian usurer, had become poor and was unable to repay her debt. Nicanor, who had married her daughter, forgave her the debt, since she was a kinswoman, but nevertheless took three slavewomen from her.[4] This is a very characteristic example, but the documents from Dura-Europos offer many other facts which show how rich Syrians had penetrated into the midst of the urban aristocracy, buying up their land,[5] and, as merchants, bankers and moneylenders, increasingly taking over the city magistracies.[6] The commercial city was engendering a new nobility.

[1] P. Dura 18 in Welles, *Parchments*, 98–104.

[2] P. Dura 28 in Welles, *Parchments*, 142–9; Bellinger and Welles, "A Third-Century Contract".

[3] E.g. Metolbai, the phrourarch (commander of the city militia? – hardly of the Parthian garrison of the city), and all the members of the city court; P. Dura 20 in Welles, *Parchments*, 109–16.

[4] P. Dura 18; C. B. Welles, "Dura Pergament 21. Hypothek und Exekution am Euphratufer im 1. Jahrhundert", *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* LVI. 2 (Weimar, 1936), 112.

[5] P. Dura 25.

[6] P. Dura 20. The title of Manes, son of Phraates, in this document has given rise to many controversies: see M. I. Rostovtzeff and C. B. Welles, "A Parchment Contract of Loan from Dura-Europos", *YCS* II (1931), pp. 1–78; A. G. Perikhanian, "Drevnearmyanskie vostaniki" (The royal landholders of ancient Armenia), *VDI* 1956. 2, pp. 47–8; Frye, "Some Early Iranian Titles", pp. 352–4.

The Parthian authority in Dura-Europos is reflected very indirectly in inscriptions and archaeological evidence. We find, for example, no sign of the presence of a Parthian garrison in the town, though it was in the Parthian period that the city walls were strengthened and a number of fortifications erected. Nor do we know anything about the considerable Iranian population, though the type of dwelling houses is undoubtedly eastern. An orientalizing of the forms of religious worship took place, including those varieties of worship that were regarded as specific to the Seleucid dynasty, but it is not clear what role was played in this process by the Parthians.[1]

The date-formulae used in the documents begin with the words: "in the reign of the King of Kings Arsaces, Euergetes, Dikaios", etc., but the traditional dating is also given according to the Seleucid era, as are also all "business" dates, such as the year of repayment of a debt. This is typical of many cities and states of Mesopotamia in the Parthian period.

We may, of course, presume, on the basis of the fragmentary material for Mesopotamia in Parthian times, that certain changes took place in Dura-Europos in that period. The well-known letter of Artabanus III (?) to Susa (21 A.D.) – the Parthian kings, like the Seleucids, corresponded with the cities by means of special letters[2] – testifies, perhaps, to a strengthening of the king's party in the autonomous cities and increased interference by the king in city affairs. In any case, Artabanus insists on a breach of the city constitution of Susa, sanctioning the election for a second term (without an interval) of the treasurer (ταμίας) Hestiaeus.[3] Characteristic is the description of the visit of Apollonius of Tyana to Babylon. This city, according to Plutarch, was "invariably hostile to the Parthians".[4] Nevertheless, a gilded statue of the Parthian king stood there, and everyone entering the city had to prostrate himself before it. There were royal spies ("ears of the king") in the city, who shadowed newcomers and observed their conduct. These facts testify, perhaps, rather to outward changes in the aspect of the cities and of city life than to changes in essentials. They could probably be due to certain political circumstances. Internal changes in city life were evoked by economic development.

[1] I. A. Shishova, "Dura-Europos – krepost' parfyanskogo tsarstva" (Dura-Europos, fortress of the Parthian kingdom), *Uchenye zapiski Leningradskogo Universiteta* XXI (1956), 117.

[2] Welles, *Royal Correspondence*.

[3] Cf., however, the opinion of W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge, 1938), p. 30.

[4] *Crassus* XVII. 1. 145; Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* I. xxvii.

The role played by the polis of Seleucia in politics, its contribution, in particular, to the struggle between pretenders to the throne of Iran – Tiridates and Artabanus III and, later, Vardanes and Gotarzes II – and especially during the rising of the 30s and 40s A.D., shows the actual position of the cities of Mesopotamia in the Parthian administrative system.

Founded by Seleucus I on the site of the ancient Opis, Seleucia was, under the Parthians, as Tacitus puts it, "a mighty city, not barbarianized [unlike Dura-Europos], where the order established by Seleucus was maintained".[1] It was taken by Mithridates I in 141 B.C. The mint at Seleucia, the largest in the Parthian empire, struck not only local coins but also tetradrachms.[2] Linked with the Euphrates by the "royal canal" (*NḤL MLKy*), and at the centre of the trade route running from Palmyra down the Euphrates, Seleucia was perhaps the most important commercial and political centre of Parthian Mesopotamia. Seleucia on the Tigris is mentioned in Palmyrene inscriptions right down to 24 A.D., when Vologaskart, built by the Parthians, took its place in the caravan transit trade. Seleucia continued, however, even after this, to be an important port, to which goods were sent from India. Seals have been found at Seleucia which belonged to the officials who collected the taxes payable for the right to tie up in the harbour.[3] On Parthian tetradrachms the Arsacid monarch is sometimes shown as married to the city's goddess; in R. McDowell's opinion this may show that the polis extended to the Parthian king, as it were, the idea of the authority of the Seleucid monarchs as the "allies" of the polis.[4]

The information preserved by Tacitus about the intense struggle between parties and ethnic groups in the city, leading to a seven years' rebellion, indicates the position taken up by the Parthian kings towards independent cities. The city was ruled by an *ecclesia*, an elected senate of 300 representatives chosen according to the principle of "wealth and wisdom". In McDowell's view the city aristocracy was made up mostly of Greeks, who were big bankers and merchants,[5] but there is no reason to disbelieve Josephus, for example, when he says that the aristocratic party also included Syrians and Jews. Undoubtedly the same process of penetration of non-Greek elements of the population into the aristocracy was going on which has been noted in the case of Dura-Europos.

Elections to the senate involved an acute struggle between the

[1] *Annals* VI. 42. [2] McDowell, *Coins from Seleucia.*
[3] McDowell, *Stamped and Inscribed Objects*, pp. 128, 130.
[4] *Coins from Seleucia*, p. 220. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 220.

"popular" and "aristocratic" parties. Tacitus writes: "When people and senate agree, they can defy the Parthian king, but as soon as they fall out, each side calls on him for help against the other, and the ally called in to help the one ends by lording it over both".[1] Artabanus III, having intervened in this struggle, supported the city senate and the city aristocracy, adopting the principle that "popular rule is closely allied to liberty, but rule by a few is nearly akin to royal autocracy". The Parthian king behaved in exactly the same way as in the dispute about the treasurer Hestiaeus of the city of Susa, but just as in that case, what is most clearly revealed is the unsound position of the central administration in a self-governing city. In any case, it was worth while for Tiridates, the protégé of Rome, "to let the affairs of Seleucia be managed by the inhabitants [of that city]", since he received powerful support from the city in his aspirations to the throne. It was typical that in this situation the protégé of the Arsacids, the satrap Phraates, should send Tiridates a letter advising him to delay his coronation. (That the Phraates mentioned in Artabanus III's letter to Susa and the Phraates who, in Tacitus' words, held "an important prefecture" and was involved in the conflict between Artabanus III and Tiridates, were one and the same man, has been proved by F. Cumont.)[2] However, very soon afterwards Tiridates was crowned at Ctesiphon, "according to the family customs by the Sūrens".[3] This clarifies the position of the Arsacid government officials in cities of the polis type: the political sympathies of the senate did not allow them openly to give support to Parthian kings who were out of favour with the city.

After Artabanus' victory over Tiridates, Seleucia rose in rebellion. For seven years, "not without shame to the Parthians, a single city defied them".[4] It was only in June 42 that Seleucia fell to Vardanes, after a prolonged siege. The city's autonomy was much reduced after this; in particular, its right to issue its own coinage was abolished.

We can only guess at the internal causes of the revolt in Seleucia, but it is clear that, despite the "pro-Parthian" leanings of part of the city's population, intervention by the Arsacid kings in its municipal affairs was attended with difficulties and did not always produce the results sought by the monarchs. The struggle for the autonomy of Seleucia, Susa and Babylon,[5] and of a number of other cities (including those

[1] *Loc. cit.*
[2] "Une lettre du roi Artaban III", pp. 249–50.
[3] Tacitus, *loc. cit.*
[4] *Ibid.* xi. 9.
[5] N. V. Pigulevskaya, *Goroda Irana v epokhu rannego srednevekov'ya* (The cities of Iran in the early mediaeval period) (Moscow, 1956), pp. 29–37.

which classical authors call the "Parthian" cities, e.g., Hala and Artemita),[1] resulted in these cities receiving extensive support from Rome: "severely oppressed", they "went over with joy to the side of the Romans, placing their hopes in friendly relations with the Hellenes".[2] This was the situation, for example, during the famous campaign by Crassus.

Retention of the traditional terminology while the institutions themselves underwent complete inner change is shown also in materials from Edessa and Palmyra in the Parthian period. In Edessa, "democratic" Greek titles were borne by the Arab shaikhs and princes – 'phylarchs' and 'arch-phylarchs'. According to Arrian, Abgar, King of Edessa, bore the title of phylarch "because his province (χωρία) was called φυλαί".[3] Seleucid court titles were borne by the courtiers of the kings of the Abgar dynasty. For examples, we read in the "Doctrine of Addaeus": "The year 343 of the reign of the Greeks, under the rule of our lord Tiberius, Emperor of the Romans, and under the rule of King Abgar, son of Ma'nu, the second day of the first Tishrin: Abgar Ukhama sent as envoys Marikhab and Shamashagram, 'first and most honoured friends and bodyguards', and with them Khannam, secretary and archivist".[4]

In Palmyra, as in Edessa, there was a tribal structure. The tribes appeared in both places under the names φυλή or γένος (and in the local terminology, *bny*) and were the structural nuclei of the city's organization. In a later period in Palmyra there was a system of four phylae, each of which embraced several tribes who traced their descent back to a common ancestor in the male line (e.g., "the sons of Mettabol", "the sons of Zabdibol", etc.). In Edessa there were apparently more phylae, and phylae and separate tribes had their own premises for worship. "Macedonian" practices, too, were retained there even down to the 4th century. This emerges, for example, from a comparison between two date-formulae: 1. "The 15th year of Trajan and the 3rd year of King Abgar (VII), which corresponds to the 460th year of the era of Alexander, during the high priesthood of Sharbil and Barsauma"; 2. "In the 618th year of the era of Alexander, the 14th year of Diocletian, when Abba and Abgar, son of Zoor, were strategoi . . . and Kanna was

[1] Dio Cassius XL. 14. [2] Tacitus VI. 41.
[3] Arrian, *Parthica*, in Jacoby II B, 861.
[4] Welles, "The constitution of Edessa", p. 126, n. 21.

bishop".[1] Even in Kavād's reign, mention is found of a municipal council which had the right to elect its representatives to a number of offices, e.g., that of the supplier of corn to the city.

The structure of the self-governing cities was, then, so effective in Mesopotamia that it was not violated by the Parthian power. Part of the taxes collected by the cities from the territories under their authority was probably, together with other dues, paid fairly regularly into the treasury of the King of Kings. Probably, too, those taxes and "fines" which the Seleucids had established were kept in force in the Parthian period, but some taxes were levied only under the Parthians. Thus, judging by the Dura-Europos documents, members of the king's court of justice appointed for the city by the Arsacid monarch, together with the special official whose duty it was to look after the financial side of the court's proceedings, were obliged to pay into the king's treasury sums equivalent to those which victims received by decision of the court. In P. Dura 20 this is 400 drachmae of silver and in P. Dura 19 it is 1,000 drachmae.[2]

The pivot of this peculiar alliance between the self-governing cities and the central authority was international trade, which brought fantastically large revenues both to the cities and to the Parthian ruling house. The fate of the caravans of traders which set out from the harbours of the Persian Gulf for Syria, or which proceeded through Ecbatana to Palmyra, depended in large measure on the central government which, apart from everything else, ensured their safety. Besides this, the central government dictated the routes to be taken, fixed uniform tariffs, and so on. When they founded Vologaskart, for example, the Parthian rulers saw to it that trading caravans no longer went to Seleucia.

Of course, this "alliance" depended entirely on the strength of the Parthian state and the effectiveness of its influence on the trade routes. When any crisis arose in Parthian Iran, or its rulers lost their footing in the Mesopotamian area, the trading cities sharply changed their orientation. This occurred especially in the period of the economic and political crisis of the 3rd century.

Material enabling us to describe those cities of the Parthian period which were situated on the territory of Iran and in the heartlands of the

[1] W. Cureton and W. Wright, *Ancient Syriac Documents Relative to the Earliest Establishment of Christianity in Edessa* (London, 1864), p. 41.

[2] Cf. also the conditions for renting given in the Auroman parchments.

Parthian state is unfortunately very meagre. A few eastern cities are mentioned by Pliny, Ammianus Marcellinus and Isidore of Charax, and the layout of the cities of the Parthian period in the area of Margiana has been fairly well studied, but written sources are almost completely lacking.

VI. ROYAL AND OTHER CITIES AND THEIR ADMINISTRATION

Under the Sasanians the process of "city-building", which is known to us from a number of written sources, outwardly recalls in every way the time of the Seleucids – the first Sasanian kings founded or improved many cities in various parts of Iran, giving them their own names. Thus, for example, according to Ṭabarī, Ardashīr I founded eight cities, of which three were in Persis (Ardashīr-Khwarra, Rām-Ardashīr, Rēv-Ardashīr), one in Ahvāz (Hormizd-Ardashīr), two in Savād (Beh-Ardashīr and Astabad?), one in Bahrain (Pasa-Ardashīr) and one near Mosul (Nūd-Ardashīr).[1] But the "royal cities" of the Sasanian epoch – and this is of primary importance – were the headquarters of military garrisons in newly-conquered countries, and later the centres of newly-formed administrative districts, the residences of the state officials in charge of these districts.

In war-time, the first Sasanian kings of Iran, Ardashīr I and Shāpūr I, conquered, among other cities of Mesopotamia, Dura-Europos. One of the graffiti gives the date of the first onslaught: "In 550 the Persians fell upon us".[2] In ŠKZ the capture of Dura is mentioned twice, in 256 and 260, while dates are mentioned in the inscriptions by Sasanian soldiers on the frescoes of the synagogue at Dura: "the month of Fravartīn, year 15, the day of Rashnu" (no. 42); "the month of Mihr, year 14" (nos. 43, 50); "the month of Mihr, year 13" (no. 45).[3] (The dates refer to years of the reign of Shāpūr I, i.e., 256–8). Some later dates are found in other graffiti. At that period Dura, which had been under Roman rule since the time of Lucius Verus, was a Roman military fortress on the Euphrates. The few Iranian inscriptions at Dura-Europos – Parthian sherds, parchments and graffiti[4] – bear witness that after a few years under Sasanian rule the muncipal organization of Dura underwent substantial changes. A Sasanian deputy, the *shahrab* (this is

[1] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 16, 20.

[2] *The Excavation at Dura-Europos, Preliminary Report* IV (New Haven, Conn., 1933), no. 233, p. 112.

[3] Kraeling, *Synagogue*, plates XLIV–XLVI, pp. 300–5.

[4] P. Dura, 153, 154, 155; Kraeling, *Synagogue*, plates XLIV–XLVII; *CIIr* III, portfolio I.

how he is named on Parthian sherds) or *hwtwy* (Parth.)[1] named Rashn, was given authority over the city. As P. Dura 153 tells us, he possessed an estate with a vineyard not far from Dura, which suggests that the "city lands" may have been divided among Sasanian settlers.[2]

The Iranian documents mention the various titles of the Sasanian officers and state officials who made up the secretariat of the *shahrab*: *gznbr* (treasurer), *š'pstn* (eunuch), *ps'nyk* (bodyguard), *d'twr* (judge), *dpywr* (scribe; *SPR'* in Parthian graffiti), *dpywr ZY tḥmy* (inscription no. 43)[3] and others. The economy of the city was restored, judging at least by the fact that the Parthian accounts, on sherds, of the issue of rations of corn to the Sasanian garrison and administration mention very large quantities of grain.

Soon, however, Dura-Europos was abandoned and ruined.[4] Seleucia's fate was a different one: captured by the Sasanian forces at the same time, it was transformed into a "royal city" and began to be called Vēh-Ardashīr. The following inscription is found on one of the clay bullae: (centre) *NHL MLKy* ("the king's canal") *ZY wldḥšpty mgw ZY*; (around the bulla) *wyḥ 'rtḥštr*; and on another bulla *wḥ 'rtḥštr štrdstn*.[5] Seleucia was also ruled by a *shahrab*, named Rastak.[6]

It is clear from early Sasanian inscriptions that the renaming of old cities, or the founding of new ones, took place in those areas which had been conquered by the Sasanian forces and made part of the *dastkart*, the demesne of the Sasanian kings. The ŠKZ inscription, after enumerating the regions and states included in Iranshahr, states: *W 'BD[Wm prgwz šḥypwḥr] ŠMH dḥkḥštr W 'BDWm 'wḥrmzd 'rtḥštr* (added above: *šḥypwhr*) *ŠMH*, literally: "and I named *dḥkḥštr* Pērōz-Shāpūr and Hormizd-Ardashīr". Thus, after conquering a region in Mesopotamia, Shāpūr I founded a new city in one of the areas of Susiana (today, Ahvāz) which had been laid waste as a result of the war.[7]

[1] These are his titles in P. Dura 153.

[2] J. Harmatta translates P. Dura 153: "From Treton to Rashn the *ḥwtwy*. Greetings" (then the usual formula for greetings) "... In the vineyard called ... [all] the lord's [property] is in order"; "The Parthian parchment from Durā-Europos", 293.

[3] *tḥmy* is probably the designation of a military unit; cf. perhaps *tgmdr* = *tagm[a]dār* from τάγμα, Nisā documents (*Novye nakhodki*, pp. 150–1).

[4] Ammianus Marcellinus XXIII. 5. 7.

[5] A. Maricq, "Classica et Orientalia 7. Vologésias, l'emporium de Ctésiphon", *Syria* XXXVI (1959), pp. 267–8; E. Herzfeld, in *Transactions of the International Numismatic Congress* (London, 1938), figure 8, p. 418.

[6] ŠKZ, M.Pers.: *lstk ZY why 'rtḥštr štrp.*

[7] Maricq's interpretation of this phrase: "Et nous avons donné à un fief [*dḥk* = 'donne, fonde' + *ḥštr* = 'pays, région'] le nom de Peroz-sapor et nous avons donné un nom à Hormizd-Ardachir" ("Res gestae", p. 332) seems dubious. The city of Hormizd-Ardashir (the capital of Khūzistān, after Shāpūr II, replacing Susa) is mentioned in the *Mātigān*; see J. de Menasce, *Les données géographiques dans le Mātigān i Hazār Dātistān* (Wiesbaden, 1964).

The increase in the number of "royal cities" was paralleled by the growth in the *dastkart* of the King of Kings. Thus, according to early Sasanian inscriptions, Ardashīr I founded only three cities in the west of Iran – *'rtḥštr šnwmy*, *wḥy 'rtḥštr*, *'rtḥštr prry*. Under Shāpūr I, who substantially expanded the personal estates of the King of Kings, fifteen more cities founded by him are mentioned, including *wḥy 'ndywk šḥpwḥr* (on the site of the city of Bet-Lapat), *tḥm šḥpwḥr*, in the west, and *nyw šḥpwḥr* (on the site of Abarshahr) in the east of the country. All of these cities were ruled by *shahrabs*, who held most important positions at the court of the King of Kings and in his governmental administration. It is clear from all these sources that *shahrabs* were appointed by the central government also in old (not renamed) cities such as (under Shāpūr I) Gudman, Gabu, Rind, Ray, Hamadān, and others. A surrounding district was assigned to each city, as in the Parthian period, and exploited by the central administration. The ŠKZ inscription has: (Greek) *πόλιν σὺν περιχώρῳ*: (Parth.) *MḤWZ' 'M prybr hmkwsy*: (M.Pers.) *štrdstn MN prw'ry KḤDḤ*, "a city together with a rural district". The term *prybr* (Parth.) – *prw'ry* (M.Pers.) – is used in this inscription as a collective noun, as, for example, in (Parth.) *W 'syry' ḥštr WMḤ 'pr 'swry ḥštr prybr YḤNT* (Greek – *ἔθνη καὶ περιχώροι*), "Syria and the rural areas which are in the province of Syria". In the *Kārnāmag* the term *parvar* may, as was pointed out by A. V. Livshits, mean "the outer wall" protecting the urban oasis.

Thus, instead of the self-governing cities of the Seleucid and Parthian epoch (mainly in the western parts of the country) which controlled considerable territories independently of the central government, the early Sasanian period saw the rise of cities which were headquarters of the central administration. In place of the alliance between the King and the cities we see extension of the royal *dstkrty* and the death of the "free" cities.

The institution of the *shahrabs*, the most important institution in the early Sasanian epoch, existed also under the Parthians. At that time the *shahrabs* ruled areas that were small in size – the administrative districts of the Parthian empire.[1] Already under the Seleucids the state had been divided into 72 satrapies, and later these have become still more numerous. The Book of Esther, reflecting the Parthian division into satrapies, speaks of 127 *medina*.[2] W. W. Tarn considers that the satrapies

[1] Cf., e.g., an inscription from the Bīrjand area: *gry 'rthštr nhwdr w hštrp*; W. B. Henning, "A new Parthian inscription", *JRAS* 1953, p. 134.

[2] G. Widengren, "Quelques rapports entre juifs et iraniens à l'époque des Parthes", *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* IV (Leiden, 1957), p. 218.

of the Parthian period corresponded to the Seleucid eparchies.[1] The "Parthian Stations" of Isidore of Charax mentions 18 satrapies, these being the ones through which ran the royal road.

In the Parthian period, there is evidence that, in the heartlands of the state especially – in Parthia, Margiana and other *shahr*s – the administrative organization was outwardly similar to that which is mentioned in early Sasanian inscriptions. In any case, in the documents of the wine-storehouses at Mihrdātkart – the fortress on the territory of which the family tomb of the Parthian kings was probably also situated – the titles of *dyzpt* (commander of the fortress), *ḥštrp* (*PHT'*) and *mrzwb'n* are mentioned. The editors of these documents presume that the territories from which taxes were gathered at Mihrdātkart were united in a *marzbān*ship (Mihrdātkart was an administrative centre), which included some smaller administrative units – satrapies.[2] It may well be, however, that the title of *ḥštrp* (Parth.) had other meanings, too: it was borne, for example, by the representative of the royal administration (the epistates) in the city of Susa. In the Parthian period there was also the title of "satrap of satraps", occurring in the inscription on the relief of Gotarzes at Behistun. The facts available do not permit us to clarify more fully their role in the Parthian administrative system, but it would seem to have been no different from what it was in the Sasanian epoch. These institutions, the development of which is closely connected above all with the extension of the royal demesne, probably ceased to exist as early as the 4th century, when the Sasanian state was finally centralized. Self-governing cities and semi-independent kingdoms such as Susa existed in Ērānshahr as late as the 4th century, but about 350 a revolt broke out in Susa against Shāpūr II; the city was finally destroyed and not far away from it, a new city arose, Īrān-khwarra Shāpūr.

Most interesting facts about the administration of cities in the late Sasanian epoch are contained in the Sasanian law-book, the *Mātigān ī hazār dātistān*. The representatives of the central administration in the cities were the judges and the *hamārkārs*, who carried out their functions in accordance with the instructions of the ruler of the province, the ostāndār. Within the competence of the *hamārkārs* were: supervision of the payment of taxes into the royal treasury, issue of documents on rights of ownership and possession, etc. All judicial processes connected with state property were conducted by the judges.[3]

[1] W. W. Tarn, "Seleucid-Parthian Studies", *PBA* XVI (1930), pp. 23–33; *id.*, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. 1–3, 113.
[2] *Novye nakhodki*, p. 172.
[3] *Mātigān* A 26. 17–27. 4; A 27. 13–28. 3. For all the material from the source relating to the administrative organization of Iran, I am indebted to A. G. Perikhanian for her courtesy.

The rural districts (*rōstāk*), with their villages (*dēh*, *QRYT'*), came within the orbit of the city administration. Some villages, not to mention towns, contained temples which had landed property. Registers dealing with landed estates and the payment of dues from these lands were kept in special record-offices. *Mātigān* (78.11–14) mentions *nāmak nidān ī ātaxš ī Xurram-Artaxšahr ī Artaxšahr Xvarra*, "the temple archives of the temple of the village of Khurram-Artakhshahr in the district of Artakhshahr-Khwarra".

These facts, which, judging by the references to certain historical figures and kings of Iran, relate to the 5th–7th centuries, bear witness to the considerable change, not confined to terminology, which took place in the two centuries that the Sasanian state existed.

Artakhshahr-Khwarra, founded in the 3rd century primarily as a military outpost in conquered lands, the *dstkrty* of Ardashīr I, and ruled over by a deputy of the King of Kings, was transformed in time into an administrative district in the chief town of which (Gōr) all matters relating to the exploitation of this district were dealt with by representatives of the civil administration of the centralized state, the *kārdārān*. The cities and regions of the late Sasanian period are mentioned in the clay bullae, as well as in the well-known work *Shahristānhā i Ērānshahr* "The Cities of Iran".

VII. KINGDOMS AND LORDSHIPS

Besides the cities, the Parthian empire also included a number of small semi-independent kingdoms and provinces which enjoyed the rights of "allies". The largest among them were Persis (Pārsa), the kings of which, judging by their names, considered themselves descendants of the Achaemenians; Elymais, where the dynasty of the Kamnaskires reigned,[1] and a number of other states on the Iranian border in the area of Mesopotamia.[2] On the early coins of Persis (down to the end of the 2nd century B.C.) the ruler's title is *prtrk ZY'LHY'*, "divine ruler". Later, in what is known as the third series of coins, the title is stamped on coins according to the formula: *X* (the King's name, later on – *bgy X*) *MLK' BRY Y* (later *bgy*) *MLK'* (e.g.: *d'ryw MLK' BRY wtprdt MLK'*).[3]

The position of these kingdoms and lordships in the Parthian state system at certain periods was independent to such a degree that sometimes the destiny of the Parthian throne depended on the political

[1] Further details in Henning, "The Monuments and Inscriptions of Tang-i Sarvak".
[2] See above, p. 701 for a partial list of these semi-independent states.
[3] See *BMC, Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia*, plates CLX–CLXXXIII; cf. Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 25.

orientation of one or other of their rulers. Thus, for example, King Izates II of Adiabene came out strongly for Artabanus III at a time of disorder in Parthia. With a small retinue the Parthian king took refuge in Adiabene. According to Josephus, Izates II brought about the restoration of Artabanus to his throne, for which he was given the right "to wear a tiara and lie on a golden couch".[1] What is meant is evidently the elevation of Izates II to the Parthian nobility, since the tiara and the jewelled throne were insignia of authority. In addition, Artabanus III joined to Adiabene the territory of Nisibis which he had torn from the Armenian kingdom.

These local rulers possessed very extensive privileges. Thus, for example, the exilarchs of the Judaeans were hereditary rulers, supported by the Parthian kings, who maintained a supreme court in their provinces and appointed local judges. Their officials, the ἀγορανόμοι, fixed market prices, watched over trade, collected duties and dues. The exilarchs regularly paid tribute for their lands to the Parthian kings and could send their military units to join the Parthian army, this being the limit of their obligations towards the central government.[2]

The situation was similar in other kingdoms as well – Adiabene,[3] Osroene,[4] Charax and Hatra. The sources show that there was a hierarchy of semi-independent rulers at the Parthian court: the kings of Media and Armenia were regarded as being the most important. When the political situation was stable, the power of the kings and lords who were under the aegis of Parthia was largely dependent on the will of the King of Kings, much as other rulers, who had fallen under the power of Rome, fawned upon Rome's representatives. A typical example of this is the account given by Josephus of the meeting in Tiberias between the Kings of Commagene, Emesa and Pontus, which was broken up by the Roman governor Vibius Marsus, "because he considered that too close an intercourse between a number of rulers could not be particularly good for the interests of Rome".[5]

There is nothing remarkable in the fact that the patchwork Parthian state was regarded by the Romans in the middle of the 1st century A.D. not as a unitary state but as a confederation, consisting of many kingdoms – eighteen, according to Pliny.[6]

For this reason, in any complex political situation a tendency towards

[1] *Antiquitates* xx. 3.
[2] Talmud: *Schebuot* 6a, *Sinhedrin* 5a, *Sabbat* 55a, *Succa* 26a, etc.
[3] Cf., e.g., Josephus, *Antiquitates* xx. 3.
[4] Dio Cassius LXVIII. 18.
[5] *Antiquitates* XIX. 8. 1.
[6] *Nat. Hist.* VI. 29.

separatism on the part of particular rulers always manifested itself. Essentially, the transfer of power in Iran from the Parthian to the Sasanian dynasty, which first took power in the kingdom of Persis, gave expression to an extremely critical situation in that country, conditioned by the general economic and social crisis of the 3rd century. The Parthian confederation, consisting of the autonomous cities of Mesopotamia and various semi-independent kingdoms and lordships, broke into pieces, and the Sasanian kings who seized the throne of Iran had to start from scratch in bringing the whole country under their authority.

VIII. THE CENTRALIZATION PROCESS IN THE SASANIAN PERIOD.

DIVISIONS OF THE EMPIRE

The Sasanian period was marked by a steadily increasing tendency towards centralization. The early Sasanian state, however, hardly differed in this respect from the late Parthian state: initially, it, too, consisted of a confederation of separate kingdoms and smaller lordships, in varying degrees of dependence on the central authority, and economically linked with it in various ways. In the early Sasanian inscriptions the local semi-independent dynasts of Parthian days are mentioned: the kings of Abrēnag, Marv, Carmania, Sakastān (they were at the court of Ardashīr I), Adiabene, Iberia (at the court of Shāpūr I), Spandurtān, Makurān, Abhira (at the court of Narseh), and others. All these kingdoms, judging by a number of facts, willingly submitted to the Sasanian monarchs. Besides inscriptions, other sources also testify to the existence of such kingdoms. We have, for example, the coins of Ardashīr, King of Sakastān (also mentioned in ŠKZ); these coins (inscribed in Parthian script) are, as D. MacDowall has shown,[1] of a type that goes back to the coins of the Indo-Parthian dynasty. It may be that the palace at Kūh-i Khwāja, excavation of which was begun by E. Herzfeld, belonged to the kings of Sakastān.

However, these same early Sasanian sources show a gradual process of the centralizing of Iran. Already under Shāpūr I the independence of Abrēnag and Marv was abolished, Sakastān became a province (*shahr*) – its full name, in the ŠKZ and Pers. I inscriptions, was "Sakastān, Tūrestān and Hind, to the shores of the sea" – and was given as an appanage to Shāpūr I's son Narseh, and later (after 274) to the son of

[1] "The Dynasty of the Later Indo-Parthians", *NC* v (1965), pp. 137–48, pl. XII, no. 11.

Bahrām I, the future King of Kings Bahrām II. This title continued until 326, at least. Judging by certain evidence, the kingdom of Carmania (after 262) came to be ruled by Shāpūr I's son, Bahrām. The same thing happened with the newly conquered kingdoms – Mesene, which was given as an appanage to Shāpūr I's son Shāpūr, and part of Armenia, which came to be ruled by Shāpūr I's son Hormizd-Ardashīr (with the title of "Great King"). In the 4th century, under Shāpūr II and Ardashīr II, the conquered Kushān kingdom was also given as a vice-royalty to the sons of Ardashīr II, Pērōz and Hormizd, who called themselves "King of the Kushāns", or "Great King of the Kushāns".[1] The independent kingdom of Elymais lasted until the middle of the 4th century.

A description of the administrative organization of Iran in 262 is given in ŠKZ: "And I [Shāpūr I] rule over the following kingdoms [Parth. *ḥštr*]: Persis, Parthava,[2] Susiana, Mesene, Asūrestān, Adiabene, Arabia, Aturpātakān, Armenia, Iberia, Machelonia [Parth. *sykn*], Albania, Balāsagān and others, right up to [Parth. *ḤN prḥš* 'L] the mountain of Kāp [i.e. the Caucasus] and the 'Gates of the Alans' and all the mountains of Pareshaḥvar [Alburz], Media, Gurgān, Marv, Herāt and all Abarshahr, Carmania, Sakastān, Tugrān, Makrān, Pardān, Hind, Kušānshahr right up to Pashkābūr and further up to Kash [Parth. *k'š*], Sughd and the mountain of Chāch, and on the other side of the sea, 'Umān [Parth. *mzw*[*nḥ*] *štr*]. And all these many kingdoms and their kings [Parth. *ḥštrdr*] and rulers of 'sides' [Parth. *ptykwspn*], all have come to bring us tribute and submission [Parth. *LN pty b'z W 'BDkpy ḤQ'YMWNt ḤWḤyn*]." The description of Iranshahr goes back to the formulae of the Achaemenian inscriptions, in which the administrative districts (satrapies) are also listed.[3]

This list of "kingdoms" mentions regions and provinces which stood in varying degrees of dependence upon the central government – semi-independent and subordinate. Some of them were ruled by vicegerents of the King of Kings, while others were subject to local dynasts. The country was divided into semi-independent kingdoms (*shahrs*) with old cities, kingdoms that formed part of the demesne of the King of Kings with new ("royal") cities, and also royal lands (Media, Gurgān

[1] V. G. Lukonin, "Kushano-Sasanidskie monety" (Kushano-Sasanian coins), *Epigrafika Vostoka* XVIII (Leningrad, 1967), pp. 16–33.

[2] This order was determined, it would seem, by the traditional hierarchy of the kingdoms (cf., e.g., *NPK*) *w p'rsy W p'rswby*).

[3] E.g. Darius at Behistūn, column I, lines 12–20.

and other frontier territories) which were called *kwst* (literally, "side") and ruled by state officials, the "rulers of the sides". In inscriptions on bullae of the late Sasanian period (6th–7th centuries) found in various parts of Iran, mention is made of *m'd kwst*, *'ḥmt'n kwst*, etc.[1]

The "geography" of ŠKZ described both "Iran" and "non-Iran", in full conformity with the new title (adopted probably about 260), "King of Kings of Iran and non-Iran". The distinction between "Iran" and "non-Iran" is clarified in the following inscription of Kartīr (NRu-SM; lines 35–40 of NRu, with gaps): "... Thanks to me many fires and magi are thriving throughout the land of Iran [*'yr'nš'ḥr*], in Mesene, Aturpātakān, Ispahān, Ray, Carmania, Sakastān, Gurgān ... Marv ... as far as Pashkābūr. And also in non-Iran [*'n'r'nš'ḥry*] ... in Antiochia, a city in the Syrian land and in the province of Syria, in Tarsus, a city in the Cilician land, and as far as the borders of Cilicia, in Caesarea, a city in the Cappadocian land and as far ... and right up to Greece, in the Armenian land and Iberia and Machelonia and Balāsagān and further, up to the "Gates of the Alans".

Political centralization appears to have been achieved in Iran only at the end of the Sasanian epoch, when the reform was completed by which the system of *shahrs* was changed to a system of four large divisions of the state, headed by vicegerents appointed by the central government and each wielding both military and civil power in his vicegerency – a kind of revival of the institution of the *shahrabs*. In addition to these four "sides" there were also districts, which were basically taxation units; in the late Sasanian period, such districts numbered 37. To the same period belong the facts given in the "Letter of Tansar", where it is mentioned that the King of Kings allowed the title of *MLK'* only to members of the royal family and frontier rulers (*mrzp'n*; *kanārang*)[2] "of the Alans, the regions of the west, Khwārazm and Kabul". Even at this time, however, the rulers of semi-independent kingdoms, when they submitted to the central government, were allowed to retain their own titles. As an example, the writer of the "Letter" quotes the case of the king of Carmania, Kābūs, and advises Jashnasf (Gušnasp), king of Tabaristān, to follow this example himself. It is also mentioned in this work that neither the title "king" nor the region to which a ruler with this title was appointed could in any circumstances be made hereditary.

[1] Cf. also *kūst-i Xurāsān* in "The Cities of Iran".
[2] For *kanārang*, cf. Procopius, *De Bello Persico* I. 5.

The division of Iran into four military and administrative districts is also mentioned by Arab geographers and reflected in the post-Sasanian work called "The Cities of Iran". This work testifies to the existence of the following "sides" (*pātkōs/pāygōs* "district, province"): the north (*apāxtar*), the east (*xorāsān*), the south (*nēmrōz*) and the west (*xwarvarān*). This conforms completely with the four *marzbāns* of the "Letter of Tansar". The rulers of the "sides" of the late-Sasanian period were among the five most important magnates of the royal court.

IX. ADMINISTRATION OF PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS

Hardly any information has survived about the way the separate parts of the state were administered in late-Sasanian times. A fortunate exception is Fārs, on which *Mātigān ī hazār dātistān* provides considerable evidence. This can be supplemented from the inscriptions on bullae which were found by the American archaeological expedition to Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr in the district of Shīrāz.[1] The inscriptions on the official seals impressed on these bullae have much in common with the evidence of the Law-Book. For example, one of the articles of the *Mātigān* mentions Khusrau I's order for a change in the title of the *magupat* of Fārs as given on his official seals: by order of the King of Kings he was henceforth to be called "the Advocate of the Poor". On one of the bullae (D. 99) we actually find the inscription *sthly dlgwš'n y'tkgwby W d'twbly*;[2] similarly we find *yzdspl dlygwš'ny y'tkgwby W d'twbl'* on a bulla from a private collection published by R. Ghirshman,[3] and *mgwpt ḥwlswd š'tkw'ty* instead of *dlgwš'ny y'tkgwby* on a bula published by E. Herzfeld.[4]

An administrative district (*nisang* or *tasūk*) often mentioned in the *Mātigān*[5] is Artakhshahr-Khwarra. Its chief town (*štrdstn*) was Gōr. Two types of landed property were to be found in this district – royal (state) property[6] and temple property. In the writings of Arab authors we meet other terms as well, designating administrative units of Sasanian Iran, as, for example, *kūra* (from χώρα).[7] Ibn Khurdādhbih

[1] Frye, *Sasanian Remains*.

[2] Cf. Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 46; *Asia Major* II, p. 144, last line.

[3] *Iran*, fig. 303.

[4] "Notes on the Achaemenian coinage", *Transactions of the International Numismatic Congress* 1936 (London, 1938), pp. 713–26.

[5] *nisang* (*nahang*) 78. 3, 13; *tasūk* 100. 6, 15.

[6] *Ostāns*, or *w'spwtl'k'n*: for further details, see A. G. Perikhanian, "Drevnearmyanskie vostanki', *VDI* 1956. 2.

[7] Cf. Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 3, note.

mentions that Sawād was divided into 12 *kūra*, each of which corresponded to an *ostān*, as in "the *kūra-ostān* Shād-Kubād".[1]

In conformity with this there were also two parallel administrative systems – a state department (*dīvān-i ostāndārīh*)[2] headed by an *ostāndār kārframān* and a temple department headed by a *magupat*. The *magupat* and the *ostāndār* were the final instances of appeal for matters affecting the whole district, while more localized matters, relating to particular parts of the district (cities, urban districts, villages) were within the competence of the *hamārkar*s in the case of the state department, and of the *rad*s in that of the "church" department.[3] Both the *magupat* and the *ostāndār* had their specific instructions, which defined their functions (*xwēskārīh-nāmag*).[4] All documents relating to the affairs of the district were sealed either with the seal of the *magupat* or with that of the *ostāndar*. Documents relating to the affairs of smaller territorial units were sealed with the seals of the *hamārkar*s or the *rad*s.

Among the bullae from Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr seals of magi (*rad*s) are especially frequent, but seals of *hamārkar*s are also met with. The formula of such official seals is fundamentally a standard one: "*X* (name of city or village) *mgw ZY Y* (name of district)", as, for example – *šyl'čy* (Shīrāz) *mgw ZY 'rtḥštr GDH* (Artakhshahr-Khwarreh). Also extant are impressions of the seal of the *magupat*s of Fārs, who are mentioned in the *Mātigān*:[5] (D. 194) – *magupat* (*dlgwš'nyy' tkgwby W d'twbly*) of Bīshāpūr; (D. 199, D. 207) – *magupat* of Artakhshahr-Khwarreh; (D. 99) – *magupat* of Stakhr; (D. 103) – *d't'wḥrmzd ZY nrsḥ'n ZY mgwny ḥndrčpty*, "Dātohrmazd, son of Narseh; the counsellor of the priests" – a title also borne by his son, Dātfarrukh, in the time of Khusrau I.[6]

The *Mātigān* defines the functions of the *ostāndār*, the *magupat*, the *hamārkar* and the *rad*: they were quite similar, the difference being merely the category of property they dealt with (state or temple). The ostāndār was in charge of the property of the king's treasury, as the magupat was in charge of that of the temple treasury. The ostāndār kept account of the amount of the dues paid in, decided questions of the sale and purchase of landed property by particular persons, took away or granted land in conditional possession (all these lands being entered in special registers) and also authorized issues from the royal treasury and saw to

[1] *Kitāb al-masālik wa'l-mamālik* (Leiden, 1889), pp. 5–6.
[2] *Mātigān* A 27. 12–13.
[3] *Ibid.* A 26. 17; A 27. 3; A 28. 3–5.
[4] E.g., A 26. 5 – *xwēškārīh-nāmak i magupatān*.
[5] C. K. Wilkinson, "Notes on the Sasanian seals found at Ḳasr-i Abu Naṣr", *MMAB* XXXI (1936), pp. 180–2.
[6] Frye, *Sasanian Remains*, pp. 60–5. *Mātigān* A 37. 11–12.

the payment of taxes into it. For example, *Mātigān* mentions an allotment of land, the income from which is to be devoted to the arming of a horseman. In the event of the death of its holder, this piece of land is to return to the possession of the treasury.[1] However, the holder's heirs could retain the land if they entered the Persian cavalry: there was a "list of horsemen" (*nipēk*), in which the holders of these allotments and their sons were enrolled. The holding could be forfeited to the royal treasury if, for example, on the death of the holder, the heir failed to pay the arrears of taxes.

These same functions were carried out by the hamārkar in the cities and villages within the jurisdiction of the district. In addition, the hamārkar had to draw up documents relating to taxation and other matters, to report on tax-assessment, on losses suffered, and so on. Judicial proceedings were conducted, in the state department, by the ostāndār for the district as a whole, and by judges in the cities.

The functions of the magupat and his rads were absolutely identical. Judicial proceedings in the temple were the responsibility of the magupat, for the district as a whole, and of the rads in the cities. This complete parallelism between the civil and the temple administrations may have existed as early as the 4th century. In any case, to judge by the *Mātigān*, Shāpūr II's order for confiscation of the property of the Manichees was sanctioned (on behalf of the temple department?) by the magupat of Iran, Aturpāt Mihraspandān.[2]

The administrative structure of Fārs was probably typical of late Sasanian Iran. Evidence for this is provided, above all, by bullae. The large number of bullae found at Takht-i Sulaimān (over 200), at Sarakhs (over 40), at Nihāvand and in other parts of Iran show, on the official seals attached, the same titles and the same standard formulae as on the bullae of Fārs (over 500), the inscriptions on which are often identical with the details given in the *Mātigān*.

Summary

The facts quoted in this description of the political situation of the cities and provinces show us the tendency of development in the Parthian and Sasanian epochs. Iran in the Parthian period consisted of three areas: that of the self-governing cities (mainly in Mesopotamia), that of the semi-independent kingdoms and lordships (on the borders of Iran), and that of the Parthian heartlands (Parthia, Margiana); each area

[1] *Ibid.* 77. 6–9.   [2] *Ibid.* A 38. 16.

had its own laws (in Mesopotamia, mainly Greek), its own political institutions (in the West, retained from the Seleucid period, and in some independent states in the West going back to the Achaemenians).

Unity was achieved to a considerable degree under the Parthians, thanks entirely to military power and control over the international trade routes. This unity was not lasting; at the beginning of the 3rd century Iran broke up into a number of independent regions.

The early Sasanian monarchy was in essentials not greatly different from the Parthian, but changing conditions made possible a gradual centralization of the state. The polis was replaced by the "royal city", the system of semi-independent kingdoms by a unified state administrative system, the religious toleration of the Parthian kings and the multitude of religions by a single state religion, Zoroastrianism.

All these processes found expression in cultural monuments, and especially in rock sculptures, that is, in those monuments that bore the character of official pronouncements. The principal subject of more than a dozen of the Parthian reliefs discovered on Iranian territory is the scene of the investiture of a local ruler by the Parthian king: Mithridates I (?) is portrayed with the king of Elymais and his courtiers on the relief at Khung-i Nauruzi, Mithridates IV and a local ruler on the relief at Sar-i Pul, Artabanus V and Khvasak, satrap of Susa, on the stele from Susa, etc. Other scenes show rulers of independent kingdoms and their courts, as for instance the complex at Tang-i Sarvak. It is characteristic that there is no relief from the Parthian period showing divine investiture of the King of Kings, which is the most widespread subject of the reliefs from the Sasanian epoch. On the other hand, among twenty-eight Sasanian reliefs we do not find a single one that shows the coronation of any local dynast by the King of Kings. Clearly this difference in official pronouncements, presented in the language of images, indicates a difference in the essential nature of the two states, Parthian and Sasanian.

X. STATE OFFICIALS

The central civil administration of the Parthian period is hardly mentioned at all in the sources. In early Sasanian inscriptions, the evidence of which, as mentioned already, can be extended back to apply to the Parthian state (at least in its later stage), civil officials are mentioned in the following order: at the court of Ardashīr I, the *pitiaxš* (M.Pers. *btḥšy*; Parth. *bytḥš*), the *hazārapat* (M.Pers. *ḥz'lwpt*; Parth. *ḥzrwpt*),

the chief secretary (M.Pers. *dpyrwpt*; Parth. *dpyrpt*), the chief judge (M.Pers. *d'twbl*; Parth. *d'tbr*, Greek δικαστῶν); at the court of Shāpūr I, the *pitiaxš*, the *hazārapat*, the *framatār* (M.Pers. *prmt'r*; Parth. *prmtr*, Greek ἐπίτροπος), the chief secretary (Greek ἀρχιγραμματέως), and the chief judge. The titles *pitiaxš* and *framatār* at the court of Shāpūr I are mentioned twice: the *pitiaxš* Shāpūr is mentioned immediately after the members of the Sasanian clan, the *pitiaxš* Kirdisrau (M.Pers. *kltslwby*, Greek κιρδισρω) after enumeration of the *shahrab*s of the chief "royal cities"; the *framatār* Vahunam is mentioned in a place of honour, immediately after enumeration of the peers, the *framatār* Shāpūr in one of the last places, but before the chief judge. At the court of Narseh, the *hargupat* (Parth. *ḥrgpty*), the *pitiaxš*, the *hazārapat*, the *framatār*, the chief *hamārkar* (Parth. *ḥštr 'ḥmrkr*) and the chief judge are all found.

Later information is provided by the extensive epigraphic material of the Sasanian epoch, in inscriptions on seals, bullae etc. Here we find mentioned such titles as: *'yl'n 'nblkpty*, "chief storekeeper of Iran",[1] *w'slwš'n sld'l* "chief of the cultivators".[2] In the light of all these facts we can conclude that the Sasanian state administrative system underwent essential changes as a result of state reforms on at least two occasions, in the 4th century[3] and in the 6th century (under Khusrau I).

The title *btḥšy* begins the *notitia dignitatum* of the early Sasanian monarchs. This title is met with quite often in the Parthian period as well. Thus, it appears in the inscriptions of Mtskheta (2nd century A.D.), where its Aramaic equivalent – *rb trbṣ* – is also given.[4] Manes is given the same title (βάτησα) in P.Dura 20.4.[5] In the Sasanian epoch the title *bytḥš* is encountered only down to the end of the 3rd century: the latest inscription with this title is on a dish from Mtskheta.[6] In Georgia and Armenia, however, this title was used for a very long time.[7] The functions of the *bytḥš* have not yet been clarified. It may be that the title signified "second person" (after the King?).[8] R. Frye has surmised that

[1] Seal in the British Museum: *CIIr* IV, *Seals and Coins*, pl. XVII, no. 1. The seal dates from the 5th century.

[2] Seal in the State Hermitage Museum; Borisov and Lukonin, *Sasanidskie gemmy*, pl. III. The seal dates from the 6th century.

[3] This period sees the appearance, e.g., of *magupat*s of particular regions.

[4] R. N. Frye, "Pahlavi Heterography in Ancient Georgia?" in G. C. Miles (ed.), *Archaeologica Orientalia in Memoriam E. Herzfeld* (New York, 1952), pp. 89–101.

[5] Welles, *Parchments* 115; R. N. Frye, "Some Early Iranian Titles".

[6] W. B. Henning, "A Sasanian Silver Bowl from Georgia", *BSOAS* XXIV (1961), pp. 353–6.

[7] A. Pagliaro, "Mediopersano *bitaxš*", *RSO* XII (1929), pp. 160–8.

[8] N. Nyberg, "Quelques inscriptions antiques découvertes récemment en Géorgie", *Eranos* XLIV (1946), p. 237, note 2 (*bitīya* < *dvitīya*); Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 45. On this title, see also: Hinz, pp. 153, 201, 206 ("Vizekönig", "Zweiter im Reiche" (**dvitiya*)

the *bythš* of the early Sasanian epoch was some kind of regent during the king's absence; he refers to Agathangelos, who states that the king of Armenia was second in rank in the empire of the Persians.[1] However, in this passage what is reflected is more probably the hierarchy of semi-independent kings at the Persian court.

The title of *hazārapat*, following that of *bythš*, may have been a military title, equivalent to that of praetorian prefect. It is found in later periods as well, notably (borrowed from Middle Persian) on intaglios of the Hephthalite period.[2]

The title of *framatār* was directly connected with the civil administration. Its Greek equivalent (ἐπίτροπος) and also the mention of this title in documents of the Achaemenian epoch, permit us to deduce that, initially, the framatār was the steward of the royal household,[3] then the steward of the royal estates (*dstkrty*), and finally, in the period when the independence of the separate kingdoms within the Sasanian empire had been completely abolished, the first minister of state (*RB' plmt'l*).[4]

The title of *vazurk-framatār* is characteristic of the late Sasanian period: so far as is known, it first appears in the time of Yazdgard I,[5] but already under the earlier Sasanian kings, Bahrām II and Narseh, the framatār had begun to play a leading role in the state. Indeed, framatār Vahunam was leader of the court party which raised Bahrām II to the throne.[6] The prominence of the framatār was due to the course of Iran's development: as emphasized earlier, the royal demesne gradually became predominant in the country's economy. Under the framatār were the secretaries (*dpywr*), headed by the *dapīrpat*, and the *hamārkars*, headed by the *shahrhamārkar*. The *hargupat* was probably also subordinate to the *framatār*; this title appears already under the first

"Vizekönig Irans"); Henning, "A Sasanian Silver Bowl from Georgia", p. 355 ("Viceroy or 'Resident'"); A. Pagliaro, "Riflessi di etimologie iraniche nella tradizione storiografica Greca", *Rendiconti dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, ser. 8, vol. IX (Rome, 1954), p. 145 ("King's eye", etc.).

[1] "Notes on the Early Sasanian State and Church", p. 318; cf. H. W. Bailey, "To the Zamasp-namak", *BSOS* VI (1930), p. 64.

[2] W. B. Henning, "Surkh-Kotal und Kaniṣka", *ZDMG* CXV (1965), p. 81; cf., however, Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 113: *hazārabadh* "prime minister".

[3] This title is also used, with similar meaning, in Sogdian documents from Mount Mugh; V. A. Livshits, *Yuridicheskie dokumenty i pis'ma* (Juridical documents and letters) (Moscow, 1962), p. 134.

[4] Mas'ūdī, *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa'l-ishrāf* (Leiden, 1894), 103–4: *buzurg-framandār* "vizier". The title *OAZOPKO ΦPOMAΔAPO*, borrowed from Middle Persian, is cut on one of the Hephthalite intaglios: A. D. H. Bivar, "An Unknown Panjab Seal-Collector", *JNSI* XXIII (1961), pp. 321–2.

[5] *vazurg framatār* Khusrau-Yazdgard at the synod in Seleucia; Mihr-Narseh in the inscription from Firūzābād.

[6] V. G. Lukonin, "Varakhran II i Narse" (Bahrām II and Narseh), *VDI* 1964. 1, pp. 48–63.

Sasanian kings, and the official bearing it was at the head of the tax-collecting department.[1] Under the later Sasanians the administrative machine became more complex. The district administration of late-Sasanian Iran has been described above. From a few fragmentary materials we can deduce that there existed framatārs (*kārframān*), hamārkars and hargupats of particular districts.[2]

Judging by the statements of Arab geographers and historians, sometimes supported by Middle Persian writings, there existed at the court at the end of the Sasanian epoch the titles of "chief of the craftsmen" (*hūtōkhshbadh*) and "chief of the cultivators" (*wastryōshbadh*).[3] The latter title (in the spelling *w'slwš'n sld'l*) is also found on one late Sasanian seal. The official who possessed this seal also held a number of other titles (*'nwrzšnpt* (?) *š'pstn*, *RB' ḥndryčpt*), which seems to have been, in general, typical of the late Sasanian epoch. One such official was Buzurgmihr, son of Bukhtak, who was not only a hargupat but also a eunuch and steward of the royal palaces.

XI. TRADE[4]

Mention has already been made of the important role of international trade in the Parthian period. By the beginning of the 1st century B.C. one of the most important trade routes was an offshoot from the "royal road" from Herāt, northward to Marv and beyond, through Āmul to Samarkand, after which this road merged with the "silk road" coming from China by way of the oases of Eastern Turkestan. Official Chinese chronicles place in the 2nd century B.C. the journey of Chang

[1] *(h)argwpaty* – Iranian **harāg*, from Aramaic *harāk*, Akkadian *ilku*; "Mitteliranisch", p. 41; Frye, "Some Early Iranian Titles", p. 353. The title *(h)argwpat* was perhaps confused (in the Parthian period) with another title: the ἀρκαπάτης Phraates at Dura-Europos (P. Dura 28), the ἀργαβίδης Mihr-Shāpūr of Theophylact Simocatta (III. 18), the *argapat* Septimius Orod [? Herodes], son of Odoenathus, King of Palmyra (his full title was *procurator*, *ducenarius*, *argapat*), the ἀρχαπέτης Barshapur, mentioned by Petrus Patricius – all may be holders of different offices – civil ("head of tax-assessment", *hrgwpt*) and military ("commander of a fortress", from ἀρκά); cf. M. L. Chaumont, "Recherches sur les institutions de l'Iran ancien et de l'Arménie", *JA* 1962, pp. 11–19.

[2] In an inscription at Darband – *'twrpt'kn 'ḥmrkry*; on one of the seals – *glmyky W nwt'-'rtḥštrkn ḥmrkry*, "*hamārkar* of Garma and Norshirakan" (Mosul, see "Mitteliranisch", p. 45). The British Museum has the seal of yet another *hamārkar*: Parthian *tyryš 'ḥmrkry*, "Tirish *hamārkar*" (*CIIr* IV, pl. IX, no. 3). On the bullae from Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr: (D.191) *'rtḥštr GDH W byšḥpwhr w . . . 'm'rkry*; (D.209) *p'ls 'm'lkly*.

[3] *Tanbih*, 103–4: Christensen, *L'Iran*, Excursus II. Cf. the well-known tale by Ṭabarī about the titles of the sons of Mihr-Narseh (Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 110), which probably reflects the division of Iran into social estates (the estate of priests, the tribute-paying estate and the estate of warriors). [For more details on the division into estates, see pp. 631ff in this volume.]

[4] See also chapter 20.

Ch'ien, undertaken for the purpose of ascertaining the possibilities of trade with the West, and state that he brought from Parthia to China seeds of grapes and lucerne.[1] According to the "Parthian Stations" of Isidore of Charax, the portion of this "silk road" within the borders of the Parthian state was 685 *schoeni* in length.[2] From Margiana the road passed through Aria, Drangiana and Sakastān into Arachosia, to present-day Kandahār, and thence to the Ghazni area, where the eastern edge of the Parthian empire met India. The interior of Asia Minor and Syria (notably Palmyra) was linked by the Euphrates road to Seleucia and had an outlet down the Euphrates to the Persian Gulf (from 24 A.D. the road went to Vologaskart, avoiding Seleucia), or else by caravan routes across Iran. The sea way to India (through the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf), opened by Alexandrian sailors in the middle of the 1st century A.D., and also the "perfume road", the caravan route from the Syrian coast to South Arabia and the Haḍramaut, were outside Parthian control. Thus, the principal commodities for Parthian Iran were Chinese raw silk (*sericum*), trade in which was carried on through the trading outposts in Sogdiana, situated along the line of the "silk road", from the 2nd century B.C. onward, and also Indian goods, such as precious stones, perfumes, opium, eunuch slaves and spices (e.g., various kinds of pepper). The Syrians, and especially the Palmyrenes, were very active as traders, and settlements of them were to be found not only in the cities of Mesopotamia but even, it may be, as far away as Marv.[3]

International trade was mainly carried on by caravan. Caravans from Mesopotamia delivered Syrian glass, silk fabrics, woollen fabrics dyed in purple, metal articles, wine and butter to the eastern regions of the Parthian realm, from where they were carried by caravans of local merchants to China and India. This trade brought in tremendous profits as is witnessed by the treasury's revenue from Judaean balsam, for example: this was a state monopoly, and in the fifth year after the conquest of Judaea by Rome the revenue amounted to 800,000 sesterces.[4]

In the 2nd century A.D. the chief centre in Mesopotamia for trade with the East was Palmyra. Caravan routes ran eastward from Palmyra

[1] N. Ya. Bichurin, *Sobranie svedenii o narodakh, obitavshikh v Srednei Azii v drevnie vremena* (A collection of information about the peoples who inhabited Central Asia in ancient times) (Moscow and Leningrad, 1950). [See also pp. 540ff in this volume.]

[2] *Parthian Stations*, p. 3. A list of "overseas" goods is given in the "Digests" (3rd century (A.D.), *Corpus Juris civilis* I (Berlin, 1970).

[3] Pliny calls the capital of Margiana a "Syrian" city (VI. 47). Cf. also two Palmyrene stelae found in Marv; G. Koshelenko, *Rodina Parfian* (The homeland of the Parthians) (Moscow, 1977).

[4] Pliny XII. 118.

to the Euphrates. Through Dura-Europos the caravans went down the river to the harbour of Charax, where ships from India put in, or else to Vologaskart-Ctesiphon and beyond, into Iran, to Ecbatana and Hecatompylos. There was also another trade route, no less lively, from Seleucia to Zeugma and from there, via Edessa and Nisibis, to Armenia and beyond, to the Caspian Sea. At Zeugma a huge fair was held annually, at which Indian and Chinese goods were sold by local merchants.[1] This fair was controlled by the Parthian administration, special state officials collecting dues from the merchants for the treasury of the King of Kings.[2] The Parthian monarchs, to encourage the activity of the Mesopotamian merchants and cities, concerned themselves with the maintenance and security of the trade routes and built fortresses to protect the caravans. At the same time, both the central government and the Parthian merchants themselves endeavoured to establish a monopoly on the sections of the trade routes which passed through Iran, preventing any direct contacts between Rome and China.

We can form an impression of the organization of the caravan trade from the inscriptions at Palmyra. A caravan (*συνοδία*, *šjrth*) was headed by a synodiarch (*rb šjrth*). Originally, perhaps, a caravan would be made up exclusively of members of one tribe. In any case, the synodiarchs of Palmyra mostly belonged to a single clan. For instance, an inscription of 193[3] was compiled in honour of the synodiarch Thaimarsa, while his brother Iddai is mentioned in another inscription.[4] Their father was also a synodiarch. The synodiarch usually subsidized the merchants[5] and himself took charge of the security of the caravan.

How dangerous the caravan trade was we may learn from the so-called "Law-Book of Yišʻ ōʻbokht", a legal work compiled in the 8th century, though many articles in it go back to an earlier time;[6] it lays down that before any commercial contract can be concluded, it must be established whether the commodity involved is "safe or unsafe". Goods transported by the international caravan trade were considered "unsafe": the Law-Book enumerates the "dangers" to which they were exposed. These were "the sea", "fire", "enemies" and "authority".[7] The "dangers" resulting from "authority" were, of course, heavier in their

[1] *Ibid.*, VI. 112–26 (xixx, xxx).
[2] Philostratus, I. xx.
[3] M. Lidzbarsky, *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik* I (Weimar, 1898), 458–9.
[4] Dittenberger, 638.
[5] Thus, it is mentioned that Taimarsa included among the goods in his caravan "300 gold coins of the old coinage".
[6] E. Sachau (ed.), *Syrische Rechtsbücher* III (Berlin, 1914); Pigulevskaya, *Goroda Irana*, pp. 132–7.
[7] Pigulevskaya, *op. cit.*, pp. 253–4.

impact than natural calamities and consisted of the interminable payments of dues that had to be made at every frontier crossed and every city entered, the state monopoly of the sale of certain goods (especially raw silk), military operations in the areas through which the caravans had to pass, and so on. A good instance of the required payment of dues is provided by the Palmyrene tariff of customs duties dated 137.[1] Taxes and dues were collected by tax-farmers under the supervision of the archons, *dekaprotoi* and syndics. The objects taxed (in the tariff mentioned) are camels returning without a load (one *denarius* was levied on them), purple-dyed wool (probably Phoenician; woollen clothing dyed purple, *purpura dibapha*, as Pliny tells us, cost 1,000 *denarii* a pound), butter (the duty on this product was highly differentiated: a camel's load of butter carried in alabaster vessels was charged 25 *denarii*, in skins 13 *denarii* etc.), hides, wine and slaves.

However, the huge profits made all these dangers and difficulties worth while. The caravan trade was the axis of the economy of the Parthian state. It almost stopped during the general economic crisis in the Near East.[2] With the formation of the Sasanian state, however, international trade soon returned to normal; and in this period, as in the previous one, the chief commodity was silk, which was of vital interest both economically and, thereby, diplomatically[3] – tribute was paid in silken fabrics, ambassadors and kings were given them as presents; they purchased allies and were used to pay soldiers. Sughd was a city which, having mastered the production of its own silk fabrics in the 6th century, tried to develop trade with Byzantium direct, avoiding Iran. On their part, the Byzantine emperors tried to break free from the monopoly held in the markets by the Iranian merchants. Byzantium and the Turkic khaquanate exchanged some embassies and after this a new trade route was opened, across Caucasia, thus also avoiding Iran.[4]

[1] Dittenberger, 645; the tariff is preserved in the State Hermitage Museum.

[2] Besides the general economic and social causes (see e.g., Pigulevskaya, *Goroda Irana*, pp. 150–2; M. M. Diakonoff, *Ocherk istorii drevnego Irana*, pp. 229–31), it is also necessary to take into account the prolonged civil wars in China (from 184, "the revolt of the yellow turbans") which disrupted the regular silk trade.

[3] N. V. Pigulevskaya, *Vizantiya na putyakh v Indiyu* (Byzantium on the roads to India) (Moscow, 1951), p. 207.

[4] Menander II. 454. For a detailed study of this question, see A. A. Ierusalimskaya, "O severo-kavkazskom 'shelkovom puti' v rannen srednevekove" (On the North-Caucasian "silk route" in the early Middle Ages), *Sovetskaya Arkheologia* 1967. 2, pp. 55–78; S. A. Jeroussalimskaja, "Le cafetan aux simourghs du tombeau de Mochtchevaja Balka (Caucase Septentrional)", *StIr* VII (1978), pp. 183–211.

Besides the fragmentary information in written sources (in various languages) which contain material on Iranian trade in the Sasanian epoch,[1] documents of a special kind about this trade are constituted by the clay bullae with impressions of seals which have been found in excavations of monuments of that period. The bullae have impressed on them a great number of seals of private individuals (some of these being repeated several times) and, as a rule, one official seal (with an inscription only, and no image), in which the town and province are named.

In those cases where an exact account exists of the circumstances in which the bullae were found, as at Takht-i Sulaimān, Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr, Āq-Tepe, and Dvin, we learn that they were all found in small rooms which would seem to have hardly been fit for the storing of extensive records; if each bulla served as seal to one document, then the little room at Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr, for example, must have contained not less than five hundred scrolls. In the Armenian town of Dvin, more than one hundred bullae were found in a store-room together with the remains of many sacks for wares on which some of them were applied. The reverse side of the bulla retains the mark of a broad strap to which it was once fastened. This is because the sealing clay was originally pressed around the ends of cords binding the object and then pressed against the object itself and over the cord which bound it. As R. Frye points out: "In a few examples the sealing was pressed over these cords at a point where they crossed. Certainly in these cases the objects sealed were not documents".[2] This, then, rules out the possibility that they were used for sealing documents. Interesting, too, is the fact that bullae found in different parts of Iran – in the south (Shīrāz), the north-west (Takht-i Sulaimān) and the north-east (Āq-Tepe) – bear the impressions of the same seals, while in the inscriptions on the official seal of the priest or the *hamārkar*, a variety of Iranian cities are mentioned. On the bullae at Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr, together with the clerics and functionaries from Stakhr, Bīshāpūr, Shīrāz, Marvdasht, etc., we see, for instance, the official sealings of the different officials from Kirmān (D.206 – *dyd ZY [n]wky mgw ZY lmklm'n*, "the new castle, priest of Kirmān"), Arrajān (D.201, D.77). In Āq-Tepe, together with the names "Sarakhs-Apāvart", we see sealings with those of Kirmān and Artakh-shahr-Khwarra. In Dvin we have some sealings from Fārs (Artakh-

[1] Pigulevskaya, *Vizantiya na putyakh v Indiyu*.

[2] *Sasanian remains*, 43. See also works listed in the bibliography under the heading "Sasanian seals".

shahr-Khwarra again) and the same sealing, impressed four times on one bulla, as in Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr (D.345). Finally, it is clear that some bullae have been impressed twice or even three times with the same seal.

One of the possible hypotheses regarding the use of these bullae, it seems to me, is that they were at one time used to seal packages of goods destined for caravan or maritime trade. This practice is known to have been followed in a later age: Ibn al-Balhkī tells us that "in ancient times, middlemen (*bayyā'ān*) tied up the freight from Kāzarūn in packs" (the reference is to bales of cloth, particularly the well-known Tavvaj canvas); "foreign merchants came and bought these packs without undoing them, for they trusted the middlemen; and in whatever city they [the merchants] went to, they produced the middleman's certificate (*khaṭṭ-i bayyā'*) and [other merchants] bought the packs at a profit without undoing them, so that it sometimes happened that a pack from Kāzarūn might pass through ten hands without being undone".[1]

This statement, it seems to me, explains several problems at once. If the Sasanian bullae were at one time used to seal packs of goods for sale, then they would bear the impressions of the seals of the trading partners and the official seal of the cleric or the *hamārkar*, certifying, most probably, that the pack contained good quality goods, in the correct quantity, and that the partners had paid all the proper dues (all this in complete conformity with the functions of the *rad*s and *hamārkar*s, as described earlier). The bulla accompanied the pack, serving as a guarantee, and when the goods were sold, the bulla served as a document of account: the seals impressed on it showed who should receive the profit, and in what proportions.

From sources of the Sasanian period, especially the *Mātigān*, we know of the existence of trading partnerships (*hambāyīh*).[2] Trading partners who carried on long distance caravan trade may have also possessed clay bullae, though, naturally, we need further studies to widen our knowledge of the economy of Sasanian Iran.[3] At Dvin in Armenia many bullae were found with late Sasanian *and* Arabian sealings (with

[1] *Fārsnāma*, ed. G. Le Strange and R. A. Nicholson (Gibb Memorial Series, n.s. 1, London, 1921), p. 146.

[2] On the term *hambāy*, see C. Bartholomae, *Zum sasanidischen Recht* IV (Heidelberg, 1920), 13; *id.*, "Mitteliranische Studien V", *WZKM* XXIX (1915), 14; cf. material on "partnerships" in the "Law-Book of Yišō'bokht" in *Syrische Rechtsbücher* III. 1 Jesubocht, Book V, ch. IV, pp. 143–7; Pigulevskaya, *Goroda Irana*, pp. 256–61.

[3] Cf. however, R. Göbl in *Die Tonbullen vom Tacht-e Suleiman* where he is strongly opposed to the "wares" theory. But even in Takht-i Sulaimān, together with the seals of Aturgušnasp fire-temple, a seal with the inscription *wyd'lthštly* was found (N704); see also N694, and p. 55.

Arabic inscriptions only). As also in the Parthian period, large trading markets are known to have existed in Sasanian times – in Persis (Persepolikon) an annual fair was held at Batnae where, as Ammianus Marcellinus tells us (XIV. 3. 3) "a great number of people of all conditions gather at the beginning of September to buy goods brought by the Indians and Syrians and others who assemble there, coming by sea and land". How the trade was organized, and what the goods involved were, is known from many sources, for instance from the "Complete description of the world and its peoples", a work compiled about 350 A.D.[1] Trade, especially international trade, was closely connected with politics. We have already mentioned the political aspect of the silk trade. Copper and iron were regarded as strategic commodities in the 6th century, and the Byzantine emperors forbade their sale to the Persians.

XII. TAXATION AND THE MONETARY SYSTEM

We know about the tax-burden in the western provinces of the Parthian empire chiefly from non-Iranian sources, such as the Talmud, accounts by the Roman and Syrian historians, and inscriptions on official seals. As to the heartland of the Parthian empire, the provinces in the east of Iran, we have the material provided by the archives of Nisā.

The basic tax in the Parthian epoch was the land-tax, paid in money or in kind. It bore different names and came to different amounts depending on the category of land and the region where it was collected (*tasga* in the Talmud, *bāra/bāz* in Iran, ἐκφόριον in the western provinces, etc.). In the documents from Nisā we most often meet the land-tax called *uzbar* (*uzbari*, *'wzbry*), which, judging by Achaemenian documents, was a tax in kind (more rarely in money) paid directly to the treasury of the King of Kings.[2] Another term very often found in the documents from Nisā is *patbāzīk* (*ptbzyk*), which we also know from Achaemenian materials (**patibāzi*, ποτιβάζις). In the Achaemenian epoch this expression signified payments in kind to the royal court – fruit, grapes, wine, etc. It appears from the Nisā documents that the lands from which these two types of tax were collected included not only the royal estates but also the lands allotted to the satraps or *dizpat*s (if the editors are right in rendering the formula of certain documents, *MN . . . LYD ḥštrp* (*dyzpt*), as "vineyards which are at the disposal of the satrap (*dizpat*)", reading *LYD* instead of *BYD*), the lands of the

[1] "Expositio totius orbis et gentium" in C(K). Müller (ed.), *Geographi graeci minores* II (Paris, 1861), pp. 513–28; Pigulevskaya, *Vizantiya na putyakh v Indiyu*.
[2] *Dokumenty*, p. 17.

members of the village communities, and perhaps also certain lands part of the income from which went to meet the requirements of religious worship.

Besides these categories of taxes, the same documents also record contributions "on their own behalf" (*MN NPŠH*) paid not only by ordinary vinegrowers but also by the commander-in-chief of the cavalry (*tyrydt mzn 'sppty*), the treasurers (*psyr gznbr*, *rmnyš gznbr*, etc.), the collectors of wine (*mdwrn*), and the horsemen (document Nova 280 bis: *ssn 'sb'r* "the horseman Sasan"). The well-known Avroman parchments, and also a number of parchments from Dura-Europos, testify to payments of rent and strict checking on these payments.[1]

Besides the land tax there was also a poll tax (in the Talmud, *keroga*) which, judging from several sources, was imposed upon the inhabitants of Mesopotamia; there is no evidence for this tax in eastern Iran in Parthian times.[2] In Syria the poll-tax had to be paid by male persons between the ages of 14 and 65, and females between the ages of 12 and 65.[3] This tax was assessed in various ways: one didrachma per head from the Jewish inhabitants, or a hundredth part of the property of the Syrians (δημόσια), etc. When the Romans ruled over Syria, they collected the same taxes from the population as had previously been paid, both land-tax (*tributum soli*) and poll-tax (*tributum capitis*).

The most important contribution to the royal treasury from land subject to the jurisdiction of the self-governing cities was, as in Seleucid times, the *phoros*. In addition there was a system of "royal" taxes – taxes on handicrafts (χρυσάργυρον) and a tax on dwellings. There was a highly-developed system of local taxes – on goods of which the king held the monopoly, on slaves, on pasturage for cattle, on the use of water, etc. Many such taxes are mentioned, for example, in the Dura-Europos parchments.

It must be kept in mind that, owing to the fragmentary nature of the sources for the Parthian period, the taxation system of that time is far from fully known, and the casual information we possess can be interpreted in different ways.[4] The taxation system of Sasanian times is considerably better known, in particular the tax reform of Khusrau I, described by Ṭabarī.[5] Analysing this reform, we can deduce that before

[1] [For more details on leases and rents, see pp. 659f in this volume.]

[2] The poll-tax in the Seleucid state is mentioned by Josephus (*Antiquitates* XII. 143), but only for Jerusalem.

[3] *Corpus juris civilis* I, L. 15. 3, p. 908.

[4] Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides*; Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History* II.

[5] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 241–5.

the 6th century the land-tax was levied irregularly, for no land-survey existed; every year the amount paid into the royal treasury varied, owing to devastation of lands, harvest failures, and so on. Ṭabarī states that "before the reign of Khusrau Anūshīrvān, the Persian kings took as land-tax from various districts sometimes a third, sometimes a quarter, sometimes a fifth and sometimes a sixth part of the harvest, depending on the state of irrigation and of cultivation in the given district".[1] The compiling of a land-survey seems to have been started under Kavād and completed in the reign of Khusrau I. In the survey list were entered measured areas of land, and a list of tracts of land subject to tax was drawn up, one copy of this being kept in a central record office while another was sent to the royal officials in the districts. The unit of taxation, according to Ṭabarī, was the *jarīb* (about one-tenth of a hectare). The tax was levied on the basis of what was grown on the land. It was calculated in money terms (from a *jarīb* of wheat or barley – one drachma; from a *jarīb* of vineyard – eight drachmae; from a *jarīb* of lucerne – seven drachmae etc.), but it was paid, probably, both in money and in kind, like the *kharāj-misāḥ* of the 'Abbasid period. Fruit trees were specially taxed (seven drachmae for four fig trees, the same for six olive trees, etc.).

Researchers have already remarked on the derivation of this tax reform from Diocletian's reform,[2] and also its fundamental purpose – an endeavour to increase contributions to the treasury to finance Khusrau's second most important reform, the reorganization of the army.

It is probable that at that period all the inhabitants of Iran between the ages of 20 and 50 were subject to poll-tax. Before then, the poll-tax was paid mainly by Christians.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

[2] N. V. Pigulevskaya, "K voprosu o podatnoi reforme Khosrove Anushirvana" (On the problem of Khusrau Anushirvan's tax reform), *VDI* 1937, pp. 143–54; E. Stein, "Ein Kapitel vom persischen und vom byzantinischen Staate", *Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher* 1 (Berlin, 1920), 50–87. [Cf. pp. 587f in this volume.]

CHAPTER 20

GEOGRAPHICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS: SETTLEMENTS AND ECONOMY

A real, if fragile, political unity had again been established over the majority of the Iranian-speaking peoples by the 1st century B.C. Indicative of this process was the generalizing of the term "Aryān" (Eratosthenes' Ariana).[1] Formerly it had designated the kingdom of the Aparni and Parthians in eastern Iran; it now applied to the entire range of Iranian and non-Iranian regions tributary to the Arsacid dynasty. In the centuries that followed, the unity of the state was often illusory; while the topography of the empire and its ethnic, economic, linguistic, and cultural composition remained divisive factors. But the Sasanian concept of Ērān-shahr re-affirmed the ideal of unification contained in "Aryān"; and, by the end of Shāpūr I's reign, Ērān-shahr had attained its greatest stable extent.

An Iranian, at the time of Shāpūr I, could have located himself geographically in two ways. He was, most generally, a resident of Khwānirah. This was the favoured part of the material world, the central one of the seven earth-regions (*kishvar*).[2] More specifically, his village or town lay within an administrative district (*ōstān*) of one of the empire's provinces (*shahr*). His province, already possessing an ancient history, was marked by its distinctive cultural complex. Geographical factors – rivers, mountains, deserts, seas – and the practicable lines of communication helped define it. So, of course, did climate and soil. The *Dēnkard*, Book IV, records the aphorism: "Produce is found as from a certain province thus according to its type of land".[3] The province, in turn, was visualized as oriented toward one of the four points of the compass (*kust*). Shāpūr I's inscription on the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht lists the provinces of the empire in geographical order and by quadrant. Three other geographical lists provide interesting

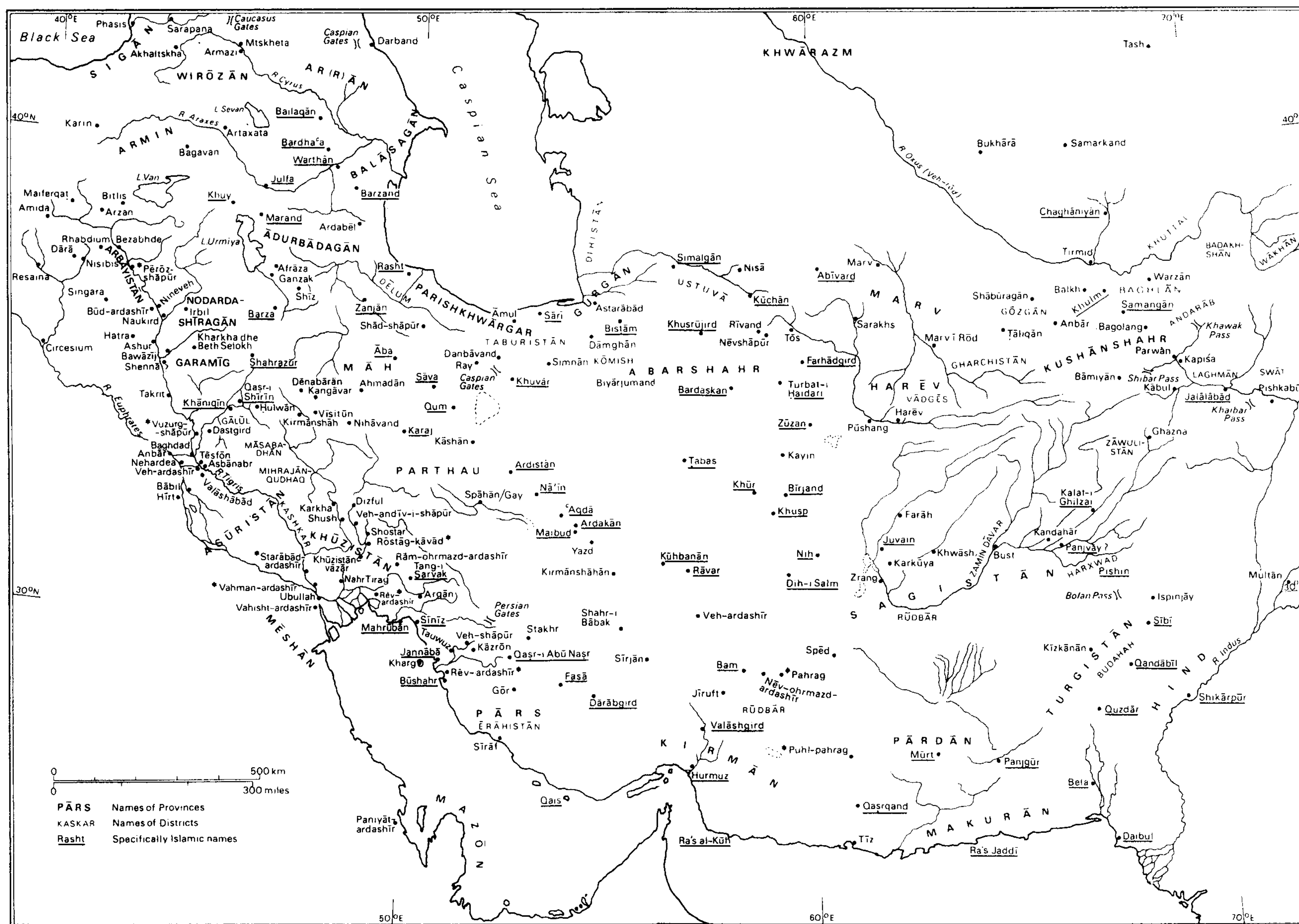
[1] Strabo xv.2.8.

[2] See, e.g. *Bundahishn*, chapter vB, pp. 55.3–57.7 (*Zand-ākāsīh*, pp. 65–70); translated in D. N. MacKenzie, "Zoroastrian astrology in the Bundahišn", *BSOAS* XXVII (1964), pp. 517–19. See also *Bundahishn*, chapter VIII, "On the nature of the lands" pp. 74.9–76.6 (*Zand-ākāsīh*, pp. 91–2).

[3] *Dēnkard* I, pp. 418.10–11.

‘The map which appears here in the printed edition has been removed for ease of use and now appears as an additional resource on the chapter overview page’.

GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS



Map 14. The provinces of early Sasanian Iran.

comparative matter for the quadrants: the Pahlavī text "Cities of Ērānshahr"; the list of cities, districts, and provinces, based on Sasanian sources, in Pseudo-Moses of Chorene's geography; and al-Tha'ālibī's description of the division of Iran into four margravates in the reign of Khusrau I.[1] These indicate that the concept of regionalization was not rigid. Several provinces were transitional and could be classed in either of two quadrants. But six coherent regions do emerge from these texts; they could be variously represented in a quadripartite scheme. These six regions are further represented in the *Bundahishn*'s account of how Sām partitioned Ērān among his sons.[2] They may be summarized as follows:

Quadrant (region)	Shāpūr I's inscription	Bundahishn	Tha'ālibī
South-west	1. Pārs		Fārs
	2. Parthau	Spāhān	
	3. Khuzistān		Ahvāz
West	4. Maishān		
	5. Asūristān	Asūristān	'Irāq
	6. Nōdardashīragān		
	7. Arbāyistān		
North	8. Ādurbādagān		Āzarbāījān
(north-west)	9. Armin		Armīniyya
	10. Wirōzān		
	11. Sigān		
	12. Ar(r)ān		
	13. Balāsagān		
(north)	Parishkhwārgar	Padishkhwārgar	Ṭabaristān
	14. Māh	Ray	Ray, etc.
	15. Gurgān		Gurgān
East	16. Marv		
(east)	17. Harēw		
	Abarshahr	Abarshahr	Khurāsān
	24. Kushānshahr		Ṭukhāristān
(south-east)	18. Kirmān		(Kirmān)[3]
	19. Sagistān	Sēyānsih	Sijistān
	20. Turgistān		
	21. Makurān		
	22. Pārdān		
	23. Hind		
	25. Mazōn		

THE QUADRANT OF THE SOUTH

The essentially southern provinces were Pārs, Parthau, and Khūzistān, although Kirmān could also be included. Pārs was the homeland of the Sasanians and a focal area of the Zoroastrian church. It occupied most of the Gulf coast from Qais island in the east to the Jarrāhī river

[1] Tha'ālibī, p. 609.

[2] Pp. 233.10–234.14; *Zand-ākāsīh* xxxv. 42–50 (pp. 299–301).

[3] Kirmān is included in the southern margravate; *Shahristanīhā i Ērān* and Pseudo-Moses put the entire south-east in the southern quadrant.

in the west, which during the Parthian period was part of Elymais. (Ptolemy also makes the eastern part of the coast, up to Nāband river, part of Kirmān.) It reached north through the Aborsēn mountains[1] – the southern Zagros and its easterly continuations. The border with Parthau lay toward the population concentrations along the Zanda River.

The city of Stakhr (Iṣṭakhr) served as an administrative and religious centre from Achaemenian times. Under the Sasanians the latter function was especially important; the dynasty's fire, Anāhīd-ardashīr, was the ideological heart of the empire. But the city also functioned as a major crossroads, communicating with the coast and the adjoining provinces. The *Tabula Peutingeriana* terms it "the market town of the Persians"; and its district must have extended from Parthau along the road to the Kirmān border at Pantyene (Sīrjān). The adjoining district of Dārābjird may have connected Fārs with the ports of Kirmān. The city of that name had already become a governmental centre under the Bāzrangid dynasty and was a Nestorian diocese by 424.

Controlling the barren, central hill region was the well-watered valley city of Gōr; Ardashīr I gave this early capital of his the honorific Ardashīr-khwarra, "Fortune of Ardashīr". The city connected with Stakhr via the town at Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr. From Parthian times, and perhaps earlier, a share of the Gulf trade probably came through Gōr (Gabra in Ptolemy) from the Būshahr (Chersonesus in Ptolemy) peninsula. Under the Sasanians, however, the fortified port of Sīrāf was becoming increasingly prominent. This city may have developed from the earlier coastal town of Auzinza (Ptolemy); a settlement of Roman prisoners could well be responsible for its fort.[2]

The concentrations of Greek-speaking and Syriac-speaking captives, however, lay in the western districts. Shāpūr I's foundation Veh-Shāpūr (Bīshāpūr), supported by the fertile grain and fruit lands along the Hilla (Granis in Arrian) river, lay near the route between the river port of Taocae (Tauwaj, Tavvaz) and Kāzrōn (Kāzarūn). Former Roman subjects may not merely have worked at the city itself. They may have helped improve the old route to Khūzistān via the Persian Gates; Aurel Stein noted Roman influences in the Pul-i Murd and two other bridges which facilitated travel to the Fahliyān valley.[3] The mountain districts north and west of the main population centres of Pārs were inhabited not only by nomads, loosely termed "Kurds", but

[1] *Bundahishn*, p. 78.5–7; *Zand-ākāsīh* IX.12–16 (p. 95).
[2] Whitehouse and Williamson, "Sasanian Maritime Trade", p. 35.
[3] See Stein, *Old Routes*, pp. 32ff.

also by communities of settled farmers. The latter built terraced fields; as in the heavily populated valleys, they stored and managed their water supply by a system of canals and dams. These also powered mills, such as the one found by Stein in the Deh-i Nau valley. Perhaps the Nestorian diocese of Mashkenā dhe Kurdū comprised the populous mountains along the road to Khūzistān.

The road left Pārs at the bridge over the Mārūn (Ṭāb) at Argān (Arrajān). Kavād refounded this strategic city, transporting there his captives from Amida and Maiferqaṭ; its honorific remains somewhat uncertain.[1] An older foundation near the lower course of the river was Rēv-Ardashīr (Rīshahr), which received some of Shāpūr I's Roman prisoners, including numerous Christians. The city probably, as in Islamic times, had commercial ties with the ports of Mahrūbān, Sīnīz, and Jannābā. In late Sasanian times the Nestorian metropolitan there directed church affairs in India and beyond. By that time, however, perhaps partly in response to the problem of piracy, the lower Gulf ports were gaining in importance. This trend may be indicated by the appearance of Qais island as a separate diocese in 544.

To the north of Pārs, the province Parthau consisted essentially of the drainage area of the Zanda river, from the mountains of the Bakhtiyārī tribes on the Khūzistān border to the neighbouring cities of Aspadana (Spāhān, Iṣfahān) and Gabe (Gay, Jay). In the east this region, known to Strabo as Paraetacene,[2] bordered on Kirmān. It may have included Isatichae (Yazd); or else the latter city, in agreement with Ptolemy, may have been the most westerly major city of Kirmān. Its western mountains adjoined those of Māh, the country of the Lurs and the Cossaei (Kurds).[3] While counting as part of Eratosthenes' "greater Fārs",[4] it would later be included with Jibāl. Geography, population, and dialect closely bound the region to Māh rather than Fārs. The *Bundahishn*,[5] in harmony with the wider sense of "Fahlaw" in Islamic times, even places the mountain of Behistūn "in Spāhān and Kirmānshāhān". The actual boundary with Māh must have crossed the Ahmadān (Hamadān) – Stakhr road south of Karaj (Rapsa in *Tab. Peut.* and Ptolemy). Although Spāhān is not mentioned in this itinerary, it was an administrative centre from Parthian times.[6] Its economic rôle perhaps

[1] Schwarz, p. 112. [2] xv.2.14, 3.12. [3] Strabo xi.12.4; xvi.1.8, 17.
[4] Strabo xv.3.1, 3; xvi.1.17; Polybius xxxi.9.
[5] *Bundahishn*, p. 81.6; *Zand-ākāsīh* ix.44 (p. 99).
[6] Cf. *Kārnāmag ī Ardashīr ī Pābagān*, 1.2; Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 13; Kirdēr's reference in his Naqsh-i Rustam inscription (ed. W. B. Henning), line 35. On the itinerary, cf. Tomaschek, "Zur historischen Topographie von Persien I", 167ff. and Miller, *Itineria Romana*, pp. 783–4.

grew with both the transfer of 14,000 of its inhabitants to Nisibis and the influx of transported Armenian Christians and Jews.[1] The surrounding districts were notable for their grain production.[2] Strabo[3] noted the population as more sedentary than in the Kurdish mountains, but banditry was still prevalent.

Spāhān must have connected, to the north and east, with the Qum–Yazd road mentioned in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. This route linked the districts of cultivation and pasturage on the margin of the desert; it passed from Kāshān (Orubicaria) to Ardistān (Pustis), Nā'īn (Ange), 'Aqdā (Rages, Ray), near Ardakān (Artacana), Maibud (Tazora), and finally to Yazd (Cetrora). The border with Māh was possibly at Kāshān or Ardistān.

The population of Khūzistān (Parthian Susiana and Elymais) concentrated toward its ample river and canal system. Strabo divides the region into fertile farmlands and mountains producing fierce warriors.[4] The ancient capital of Shūsh (Susa), by its connections with Mesopotamia, Mesene (hence with the Gulf trade), and Fārs, remained an important economic centre into the Sasanian period. It contained a mint and became the seat of a diocese by 410. Shāpūr II, who refounded the city as Ērān-khwarra-Shāpūr ("Shāpūr's Fortune of Iran"), settled many of his Roman captives in the area. Their labour was used there on such projects as the Pāy-i Pul over the Karkha (Eulaeus). Others were settled at the major city upstream from Shūsh, Karkhā dhe Lādhan (Ērānshahr-Shāpūr), which was likewise a bishopric, and perhaps also at the mint-city Nahr Tirag (Nahr Tirē). One day's journey to the east lay the provincial capital, Khūzistān-wāzār (Sūq al-Ahwāz), at the head of navigation on the Kārūn (Pasitigris) river. A bishop was already installed in this market town when Ardashīr I renamed it Hormizd-Ardashīr. The city was linked with Shūsh via the Shaur canal (the Choaspes?); and its bridge carried a southern road toward the major city in the east of the province, Rāmhurmuz (Rām–Ohrmazd-Ardashīr "Ardashīr's Peace of Ohrmazd"). This early Sasanian foundation was likewise a mint and, by 410, centre of a diocese.[5]

The heavy cultivation of the Kārūn districts above Ahvāz is indicated by the dams there and at Wais, but especially by that at Shōstar (Sostrate). Distribution of water, and transportation as well, was aided by the Masruqān (*Ardashīragān) canal.[6] This channel descended to Ahvāz through Rustuqbādh (*Rōstāg-kawād, later 'Askar Mukram). These

[1] Markwart, *Catalogue*, 53.
[2] Diodorus Siculus XIX.26, 34.
[3] XVI.1.18, 34.
[4] XVI.1.17–18; cf. Pliny VI.31/133–6.
[5] Markwart, *Catalogue*, 46.
[6] See Schwarz, p. 300.

constructions proceeded from the reign of Ardashīr to that of Shāpūr II and probably beyond. West of the Kārūn, Shāpūr I refounded the other major city on the Shūsh-Fārs road; Bēth Lapaṭ, the province's other pre-Sasanian diocese and later seat of the metropolitan, became Jundīshāpūr (Veh-andīv-i-Shāpūr "Shāpūr's Better than Antioch"). It was "a city like Constantinople"[1] at least in its large Roman colony, begun with the captives of Valerian's army and augmented by physicians who joined the royal court there. The importance of this city had probably already been enhanced by Ardashīr's erection of the Dizful bridge over the Āb-i Diz (Coprates). This construction improved the difficult road through the mountain districts where the province adjoined Māh.[2] Māsabadhān (Massabatice) and Mihrajānqadhaq had been under Elymaean domination,[3] but under the Sasanians they probably formed part of Māh.

The attention given to Khūzistān by the Sasanians indicates its importance. The construction of irrigation works was continued with the aim of increasing productivity. The wheat and barley crops were abundant. Sesame and dates were plentiful, and apparently trade had popularized rice there before Parthian rule.[4] The population remained ethnically complex through the Sasanian period. In the north and east Iranians mingled with the older Elamite-Semitic people, whose individuality is expressed in the dynastic shrines at Shīmbār and Tang-i Sarvak. In the west the province continued the Aramaic-speaking area; and the dramatic Arab invasion early in Shāpūr II's reign may have developed from a continual infiltration since Parthian times. Finally, some of the "Zuṭṭ" Indian tribes transported from the Sasanian eastern frontier flourished in the Rām–Ohrmazd-Ardashīr district. Given this heterogeneity of the province, its distinctiveness as a dialect area is not surprising.[5]

THE QUADRANT OF THE WEST

The Sasanian west comprised the regions largely inhabited by an Aramaic-speaking population but including both settled and nomadic Arabs. It was organized into four provinces, whose pattern was followed in the Nestorian hyparchies formalized in 410: Mēshān (Maisān); Asūristān (Bēth Armāyē); Garamīg ud Nōdardashīragān (Bēth Garmai, Ḥedhayyabh); Arbāyistān (Bēth 'Arbāyē).

[1] Bar Hebraeus, p. 56.
[2] Diodorus Siculus XIX.19.2.
[3] Strabo XI.13.6; XVI.1.18.
[4] Strabo XV.3.11; cf. Diodorus Siculus XIX.13.6 and Laufer, pp. 372–3. For India, see *Periplus*, 41.
[5] See Lazard.

Mēshān combined the Parthian vassal kingdoms of Mesene and Characene; it reached north along the Shaṭṭ al-ʿArab and then the lower Tigris to Madhār, possibly somewhat beyond. Its key urban centres were the three ports on the upper estuary, which eclipsed the more ancient delta port of Teredon. Farthest north lay the Alexandrian foundation eventually called Spasinou Charax (Karkha dhe Maisān). It has recently been identified with the site at Jabal Khayābir, along the ancient bed of the Karkha toward its former confluence with the Shaṭṭ.[1] Here, loosely under Parthian authority, converged caravans from Susa, Gerrha, and especially Seleucia or its emporium, Vologesias. Twelve miles downstream lay Perāt dhe Maisān. Both these cities were refounded by Ardashīr I (*Starābād-Ardashīr and *Vahman-Ardashīr respectively), were bishoprics, and may have contained Sasanian mints. Below Perāt, the city of Apologos (Ubulla) was an official emporium in the first century A.D.[2] Its importance in the Gulf trade continued. The emperors Honorius and Theodosius designated it in 408/09 as the Gulf's centre for transactions in the silk business; the Nestorian metropolitan was residing there in 424–35, rather than in Perāt.

The Semitic inhabitants of this region are divided by Strabo into "Chaldeans" (Aramaic-speakers) and Mesenian Arabs.[3] The raiding, nomadic Arabs to the west must have added to the population, and the Nabataean and Palmyrene merchants as well. Not only Iranians settled there under the Sasanians, but some of the transported Zuṭṭ. The latter were more numerous toward the swamps of Asūristān; they included the Sābaj – if not Indians, possibly Malays taken captive in Hind or recruited there as sailors.[4] The idol of Zūn seen by the invading Arabs at Ubulla may have belonged to a colony of deportees or of merchants from the Indian frontier.[5] The province was notably fertile, the best one for barley, according to Strabo.[6] Sesame oil was produced, and dates in abundance. The 19th-century estimate of 2,150,000 date-palms between Baṣra and Muhammara and beyond it may well be less than the number in the Sasanian period.[7] Already Strabo knew of a "Persian song" extolling the many uses of the date-palm; the Middle Persian *Drakht ī asūrīg* is perhaps only one version. Many of the dried dates imported into the Roman empire may well have been grown in Mēshān.[8]

From its days as the Seleucid "eparchy of the Red Sea",[9] Mēshān

[1] See Hansman, pp. 21–58; cf. Pliny VI.31/138.
[2] *Periplus*, 35.
[3] XVI.1.8; see also Pliny VI.32/143.
[4] See de Goeje, *Mémoire*.
[5] Markwart, "Das Reich Zābul".
[6] XVI.1.14.
[7] Lorimer, p. 2298.
[8] Diocletian's tariff ed. Blümner, 6.81.
[9] Polybius V.46.7

played a vital rôle in the sea trade along the Gulf and on to India. But neither the Seleucids nor the Parthians achieved Alexander's ambition of unifying the coast.[1] Perhaps the Arabian port of Gerrha was as much a partner of Charax and Apologos as a rival. Some Mesenians lived there;[2] they could have been active in importing from Arabia Felix and Africa aromatics, ivory, and such curiosities as the ostriches presented by a Parthian embassy to the Chinese in A.D. 101. A more serious rival may have been Ommana.[3] If that city lay on the north shore of the Gulf, possibly in the Hurmuz straits, it would have diverted trade to the kingdom of Persis;[4] goods would then have been carried overland to Seleucia. Ommana received cargoes of Arabian aromatics and of ebony, teak, and sandal from the Indian port of Barygaza (Broach). Other merchandise could have reached Ommana or Mēshān from Barbaricum, the major port on the Indus.[5]

Roman rivalry in the sea trade with India became increasingly serious after the monsoons became utilized for direct sailing to Barygaza, Muziris (Cranganore), and down the Malabar coast;[6] Arab intermediaries were no longer necessary. By the end of the 1st century A.D., some Roman ships were reaching the Ganges and the Golden Chersonesus of Malaya.[7] It is hardly surprising that a Roman "embassy" had reached China from India by 166. Its exports, such as amber, coral, copper, tin, glass, and woolen fabrics, were already reaching Oc-eo, the entrepôt of the Fu-man kingdom on the Mekong. Of the goods which remained in India, some moved north to the Kushān kingdom, perhaps accompanied by a considerable amount of specie. The Kushāns, in return, directed a share of the Chinese and Central Asian land trade to Indian ports. The range of goods exported to Roman Egypt and to Mēshān (where a few Kushān coins have been found) emerges from the *Periplus* and the 3rd-century Alexandrian tariff-list.[8] "Indian drugs, spices" are the most numerous items, including pepper, ginger, cinnamon and cassia, aloes, galbanum, assafoetida, malabathrum and spikenard. Precious and semi-precious stones, pearls, ivory, and tortoise-shell formed another major category. Fabrics included silks, cottons, and muslins; silk thread was also shipped, and perhaps another type of thread named "Indian hair". "Indian steel", "Indian lions and lionesses" are also mentioned. Fur pelts were brought from Trans-

[1] Strabo XVI.1.9–11. [2] Strabo XVI.3.3. [3] See p. 772, and *Periplus*, 36.
[4] Cf. *Periplus*, 36 and pp. 150ff; and Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. 481–5.
[5] *Periplus*, 38–9. [6] Pliny VI.26/100–1.
[7] Hence the data of *Periplus* 62–5 and Ptolemy VII.2–3.
[8] Hill, p. cxcvi. *Digests*, ed. Kriegel, 39.16.7.

oxiana and Central Asia. It is perhaps these "Seric skins"[1] and "Tokhār martens"[2] which the tariff list terms "Babylonian furs, Parthian furs".

Sasanian control of the trade route through Tukhāristān was complemented by hegemony in the Gulf and as far as the Indus. The south shore of the Persian Gulf, from Baḥrain at least as far as Cape Macae[3] at the straits, was formed into the province of Mazōn. While 'Umān was important enough to be organized as a diocese, the majority of Iranian and Mesenian residents apparently concentrated around Baḥrain. Ardashīr, in order to secure the region, founded the city of Paniyāt-Ardashīr on the coast, in the district of Qaṭīf.[4] The city functioned as a bishopric by 576; two others were on the islands of Tārūt and Muḥarraq. The seat of government, however, was Gerrha (Hajar); in late Sasanian times it had a community of Jews as well as of Zoroastrians and Nestorians.[5] The Sasanians thus controlled the beds of pearls so highly esteemed in Sanskrit lapidaries. Other likely exports to India (and to Oc-eo) are the products noted by Hsüan-Tsiang: carpets, finished silk and woolen fabrics, garments of felt and skin.

Roman trade with India continued in the Sasanian period. Thus the "scholasticus of Thebes" journeyed to Malabar not long before 350; and an Indian embassy reached Julian in 362.[6] For the 6th century, Cosmas Indicopleustes depicts the rivalry of Axumite and Byzantine merchants with the Persians on the west coast ("India Interior"); and it was through India that monks reached Central Asia and smuggled back silkworm eggs.[7] But at that time it was the Iranians who dominated the Indian ports,[8] and the Christians there were under the church hyparchy of Fārs. The continuing involvement of Iran with India is indicated by the exchange of embassies between Khusrau II and the king of the Deccan.[9]

North of Mēshān, the province of Asūristān formed "the heart of Ērānshahr".[10] The road to the capital ran between the swamps and the Tigris through the district of Kaskar. West of the swampland and of the Euphrates, Shāpūr I's foundation of Hīrt (Ḥīra) guarded the frontier of the nomadic Arabs, as had Alexander's foundation in this region.[11] It served both commercial and military movement along the Euphrates. The north-western frontier of the province, along the

1 *Periplus*, 39.
2 *Drakht i Asūrig*, p. 112, para. 42.
3 Strabo XVI.3.2.
4 Ḥamza, p. 33.
5 Balādhurī, pp. 78–81; Hitti, pp. 120–3.
6 Ammianus Marcellinus XXII.7.10.
7 Procopius, *Wars* VIII.17.1–8.
8 Procopius, *Wars* I.20.9–12.
9 Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 371–2; Hādī Ḥasan, pp. 88ff. and plate.
10 See, e.g., Barbier de Meynard, p. 63.
11 Arrian VII.21.7.

Euphrates road, was at or near the juncture of the Great Khābūr; on the right bank of the latter river lay Circesium, the southern bastion of the Roman *limes*. On the Tigris, the province extended to Shennā dhe Bēth Remmān (Sinn of Bārimma) at the Little Zāb's juncture. South of Kirkūk and Shahrazūr, its boundary extended to the Zagros frontier and Māh province.

The urban development of Asūristān under the Iranians focussed on the demographic centre of the province. The town of Tēsfōn (Ctesiphon), opposite Seleucia, was developed as a base for Parthian control.[1] The rebellion of Seleucia in A.D. 36–43 led Valgash (Vologeses) I to establish a new emporium, Vologesocerta, several miles below that city; it lay strategically on the Royal Canal (Nahr al-Malik) and served the Palmyrene caravans descending the Euphrates or ascending from Bābil. As Valāshābād (Sābāṭ), it formed a suburb of the Sasanian capital. Seleucia itself was refounded by Ardashīr as Veh-Ardashīr (Bahurasīr). A royal paradise was built there, and its mint indicates its economic rôle. Across the Tigris, Ctesiphon, the other member of Māḥōzē (Madā'in), was probably the place mentioned as the "City of Asūr" in *Shahristānīhā i Ērān*.[2] It acquired several satellite towns: Asbānabr (Asfānūr) lay one mile to the south; in between, Khusrau I settled some of his Roman prisoners at Veh-az-Andīv-Khusrau ("Khusrau's Better than Antioch"), hence its common name, Rūmīyà. It formed a diocese distinct from the metropolitan's residence at Māḥōzē. Another suburb, Hanbū-Shāpūr (Janbsābūr), is attributed to Kavād.

Especially important to the Iranians was the ancient road from the capital into Māh; this route brought the silk caravans to Mesopotamia and served the movements of armies, officials, and the court. The road left the capital district of Khusrau-shād-Ohrmazd and entered *Bāzīgān-Khusrau; this district included the heavily populated and intensively cultivated cantons along the Nahravān canal. Farther northeast lay the Parthian district Apolloniatis and its capital Artemita (Chalasar). Hormizd I refounded the city as Dastigird (Daskara), whose royal residence was particularly important under the Khusraus. Khusrau I built there "a court, palace, (and) fort";[3] the district was then termed Khusrau-shād-Kavād. Here a road from Takrīt joined the eastward highway, which continued through Gālūl (Jalūlā) into the district Chalonitis (Shād-Pērōz-Kavād). The stations Khāniqīn and Qaṣr-i

[1] Strabo XVI.1.16. [2] Markwart, *Catalogue*, 52. [3] *Ibid.*, 20.

Shīrīn led to the city of Ḥulwān (Albania) at the entrance into the mountains and Māh province. Along with its importance as a market, Ḥulwān must have served as a major base for the spread of Christianity in Māh; Roman prisoners were probably settled in the adjoining dioceses of Balāshfarr and Captivity of Balāshfarr. Other Sasanian constructions also existed along or near this highway.[1]

The Parthian western highway described by Isidore formed one route for the flow of trade to Roman Mesopotamia and Syria. From Seleucia or Vologesocerta the road followed the Royal Canal to its origin at the Euphrates. The market town there was Nehardea, at or near Isidore's Neapolis. Under both the Parthians and Sasanians, Nehardea was the outstanding economic and intellectual centre among the numerous communities of Jews concentrated toward central Mesopotamia. The other major city on the Euphrates was Massice (Besechana in Isidore) at the opening of the Nahr 'Īsā canal. It served the Sasanians as a granary, arms depot, and customs house and so acquired the name Anbār. Shāpūr I bestowed the honorific Pērōz-Shāpūr to commemorate his defeat of Gordian in 244. Perhaps Roman prisoners contributed to the construction of the double wall and citadel which, in Shāpūr II's reign, withstood Julian's siege.[2] It was a bishopric by 420.

The alternative route northward offered a choice. From Ctesiphon one could follow the left bank of the Tigris to Baghdād. This market town lay in the same Bādūrayā district as Anbār at the other end of the Nahr 'Īsā. Ten *frasangs* above it was 'Ukbarā, which Shāpūr I refounded as *Vuzurg-Shāpūr and settled with Roman captives. Beyond was the district Tīrhān, in which the road crossed the Tigris to reach Takrīt (Peloriarca in *Tabula Peutingeriana*). From there the Tigris route led to Garamaea, while the northwesterly route along the Wadi Tharthar brought one to Singara via Ḥatra. East from Takrīt, besides the road to Dastigird, ran a direct road to Ḥulwān. The alternative route to Takrīt began at Seleucia and was especially popular under the Parthians. The road ran through the desert west of the Tigris, avoiding the heavy tolls along the river.[3] It was supplied with cisterns and administered well by the Scenite Arabs of the region. The road ran through their city, Scenae, perhaps the "Monumenta Regum" of *Tabula Peutingeriana*.

Along the roads of Asūristān moved the bulk of Iranian trade with the west and also the flow of communications with the west, especially

[1] See Markwart, *Catalogue*, 19 and pp. 59–60.
[2] Ammianus Marcellinus XXIV.2.9–17.
[3] Strabo XVI.1.26.

among the Christian and Jewish minorities. Additions to the population, besides an influx of Iranians, came largely from continuing Arab infiltration and the Sasanian settlements of Roman captives and deportees. There were also incidental additions, such as the Ghassānids' sale of their Samaritan captives as slaves. The heavy population of Asūristān was supported by its agricultural wealth. While road-tolls and tariffs provided useful revenue, especially to the Sasanians, the Sasanian state was supported primarily by its levies on population and productive resources. Perhaps the cultivation of wheat and barley was so extensive that it made possible the low produce-tax (*kharāj*), cited for Khusrau I's reign, of one dirham per *jarīb* of land.[1] The less important rice crop received a lower rate, while vegetables were exempt. Although the rates of seven and eight dirhams on vines and on alfalfa seem substantial, they may reflect the high value of these crops. The low rate on date and olive trees should indicate the cheapness of their commodities. It was probably a "common" rather than a "quality" date-palm which the Talmud valued at 33⅓ dirham; the tax-rate given for these is one dirham per cluster of six.[2]

The Parthians and Sasanians continued the maintenance and development of the ancient irrigation canals from the Dujail in the north to the *Shāpūr-kandag, which continued into Mēshān. The fragility of this agricultural system had been noted by Strabo:[3] Silting of the canals had to be prevented by regular cleaning. The springtime rise in the rivers had to be controlled to prevent flooding; but runoff had to be limited to preserve a summer water supply. In Kavād's reign, a dam of the Kaskar district was breached, and many fields were inundated. Khusrau I was attentive to the irrigation system. But near the end of Khusrau II's reign, the rivers underwent extraordinary floods. Attempts to repair the damage failed, and the subsequent Arab invasion further delayed recovery of the lost croplands.[4]

North of Asūristān between the Tigris, the Little Khābūr, and the mountains of Ādurbādagān (Āzarbāījān) lay the Sasanian province Garamīg ud Nōdardashīragān. This region gave access to Mesopotamia from the northern provinces and so had commercial and military importance. Its two leading cities, Karkha dhe Bēth Selōkh (Kirkūk) and Irbil, were seats of Nestorian metropolitans. Ardashīr refounded

[1] Mas'ūdī, II, p. 204; Nöldeke, *Ṭabari*, pp. 244–6.
[2] Neusner, *History* III, p. 302. [3] XVI.1.9–10.
[4] Balādhurī, pp. 291–3; Hitti, pp. 453–4.

Ḥazza, near the latter, as the provincial capital of Nōdardashīr. Both Irbīl and Kirkūk were major points of communication between the Tigris plain and the mountains. Through them passed the Nisibis–Ḥulwān road. The crossing of this road into northern Adiabene became the Sasanian foundation *Pērōz-Shāpūr (Faishābūr). Perhaps Khābūr-Kavādh was founded in its vicinity and also was located on this road.[1] With this highway connected a road through Gordyene from the Bezabhde crossing. As it approached and crossed the Great Zāb, one or more lateral roads presumably joined it from the Tigris cities of Niniveh and Naukird (Hadītha). From the Tigris crossing at the latter city, a road ran to Singara. To the south, on the Little Zāb, the city Bawāzīj al-Malik formed a border-station of the province. Eastward from Irbīl, a road into the mountains eventually reached the Atropatenian highway in the Jaghatū valley. This route may well have been used by the Christian missions to the Caspian region and eastward; it also rendered the province vulnerable to invasion by the tribes of the Caspian mountains or by Roman and Byzantine armies descending from Armenia. Eastward from Kirkūk, the extent of the Garamīg districts was probably to the diocese of Shahrazūr.

The province of Arbāyistān reached across upper Mesopotamia toward the Khābūr and north to the lower districts of Armenia. The relative extent of Roman and Iranian spheres of influence here fluctuated greatly in the Parthian and early Sasanian periods. The concessions of Jovian in 363 eliminated the eastward bulge of Roman control along the two major east-west highways. Iranian domination was extended to the Great Khābūr along the trade route from Singara toward Syria. To the north, territory was gained to Nisibis and beyond on the road to Resaina; but Rhabdium, on the southern edge of the Ṭūr ʿAbdīn mountains, remained a Roman outpost. The route connecting these two highways was also surrendered to the Sasanians; but the Roman foundation of Dara helped defend the continuation of the northern highway and also its branch to Amida.

The massive Roman fortifications of Singara made it a valuable defensive post. Kavād settled nearby the Qadishāyē, who were perhaps Kurds or other mountaineers intended to better secure the region. Nisibis, however, was better suited as a trade centre. Its access to Syria was easier and it lay in a fertile district receiving an abundant water supply. Here were concentrated the Iranian colonists. The city

[1] *Tabula Peutingeriana*: Ad Flumen Tigrim – Thelser – Albania.

was an official market for Roman–Iranian trade, along with Callinicum on the Euphrates route and Artaxata on the Armenian route. The products of Iran, imports through the Indian and Arabian sea-trade, and silks brought by the overland caravans assembled at Nisibis for sale to Roman merchants. The vigour of this commerce is indicated by the Romans' September trade fair at Batnae, before the designation of official markets.[1] The silk trade, which supplied the weaving industry of Syria, continued to be especially lucrative. It was maintained despite the frequency of war, when Arab auxiliaries of both sides often raided along the roads. An additional threat, particularly from the Sasanians, was the massive deportation of citizens from major captured cities, e.g., Callinicum in 542.[2] Justinian and Khusrau I affirmed Nisibis and Dara as centres for the silk trade, although war had brought higher prices and higher Sasanian duties.[3]

THE QUADRANT OF THE NORTH

The north-west

The Sasanian northland consisted of Māh and the Caspian districts plus the north-west region. The north-west Iranian ethnic and linguistic frontier lay in the province of Media Atropatene (Ādurbādagān). Its territory included the districts and road west of Lake Urmīya north to the Araxes. In the east it was bounded by the plain of Balāsagān (Mūqān), the mountains of Gēlān, and the Safīdrūd – whether before or beyond Zanjān. To the south the province merged with central Media (Māh). Its mountains were thus accessible for the movements of the Kurds and other western mountain tribes and of the Caspian tribes. Its major highway crossed the province, east of Lake Urmīya, from Hamadān toward Artaxata. Iranian trade passed this way to the Caucasus,[4] and it served as a military route from the campaign of Tigranes II to that of Heraclius. The group of seven stations depicted in *Tabula Peutingeriana* across the mountains from Ḥulwān must begin in the Jaghatū valley: Nicea Nialia could be Barza, where the road to the Gādir valley and Urmīya diverged. The main road continued to or by Laylān, possibly the Atropatenian capital of Ganzag-ī Shīzīgān (Gazaca). To the east of this stretch of road, a route along the Sārūq river led to the cult site of the Karafto caves and on to Takht-i Sulaimān and the city of Shīz.

1 Ammianus Marcellinus XIV.3.3.
2 Procopius, *Wars* II.21.31–2; *Ancedota* III.31; XVIII.5.
3 *Ibid.* XXV.6.
4 Strabo XI.5.8.

This summer residence of the Parthian kings contained, under the Sasanians, the great shrine of the foundation Ādur Gushnasp. North of Ganzag lay the stronghold of Praaspa/Phraata (later Afrāza/Marāgha), which resisted Antony's siege in 36 B.C. The subsequent route to Artaxata seems to have been via Marand and Khūy, then following the Atropatenian bank of the Araxes.[1]

Toward Gīlān lay Ardabīl, "City of Ādurbādagān".[2] It secured the road into Balāsagān and Albania, which offered an invasion route to Alans, and later Huns, coming from the Caspian Gates. It was reached from Māh via Zanjān. The latter city was a major crossroads; a north-westerly route ran to the crossing of the Araxes at Julfa. This is possibly the Lazo–Sanora road sketched in *Tabula Peutingeriana*.

Armenia and the kingdoms of the Caucasus had acquired an Iranian element in their populations from the early Scythian invasion,[3] and Alan incursions into Armenia and Atropatene must have added to this minority. Thus the southeast district of Armenia could be named Sacasene; farther north, Ptolemy's Siracene indicates an influx of the nomadic Siraci, who were adjacent to the Alans.[4] The diffusion of Iranian mountain tribes into Armenia from the south would have been encouraged by the Parthian and Sasanian policy of employing them in their north-western campaigns. In northern Armenia, the Iranian–Roman rivalry for political domination was exercised along the principal east–west highway. Artaxata was the key crossroads in Iranian control. An eastern road descended the Araxes from it to Julfa (Sanora in *Tabula Peutingeriana*), where the road from Atropatene connected. The highway continued into Albania toward the Caspian. It apparently followed the coast into Gīlān to Cyropolis (Rasht), then turned inland along the Safīdrūd to Atropatene. Northwest from Artaxata, a branch highway ran to the upper course of the Kur, reaching Georgia and, from there, Colchis. The westerly road from Artaxata proceeded through the Bagrevand district to the Qara-ṣu branch of the Euphrates and secure Roman control. The Byzantine frontier city of Kārin (Theodosiopolis, Erzerum), near or at the old station Tharsidarate, served as a defensive bastion and offensive base against Iran. To the south, the vague border between the Roman and Sasanian spheres ran through the mountains. Here, according to Procopius, subjects of both empires mingled freely and shared a common market for their produce.

[1] Cf. Miller, p. 781.
[2] Markwart, *Catalogue*, 56.
[3] Herodotus IV.1ff.
[4] Strabo XI.2.1.

South of the mountains, however, ran a second major highway; the Melitene–Amida road crossed the Tigris and continued to the vicinity of Bitlis. Continuing north, it joined the Artaxata road at or before Bagavan (*Bagauna). The major link of this southern highway to Nisibis and the Arbāyistān road was from Tigranocerta; this city was probably refounded as Martyropolis (Maiferqaṭ). After the peace of 363, it defended the Roman frontier of the Nymphius (Batman-ṣū) river; at that time the districts from Arzanene to Gordyene and the boundary of Nōdardashīragān returned permanently to Sasanian control.[1]

The establishment of Sasanian predominance in the Caucasus provided an added weapon against Rome. In Iberia, the dynasty of governors (*bidakhsh*, pitiakhsh) established at Harmozica (Armazi) protected the route along the Kur and also the northerly route along the Aragus (Aragvi) to the Darial pass – the Iberian/Caucasus/Alan Gates. Beyond, says Strabo, lay "the country of the nomads".[2] At this point, penetration of the nomads could be barred. However, as pressure from the Hun tribes mounted from the late 4th century, the payment of subsidies must have formed an equally important defence.[3] The Huns also proved useful auxiliaries, as in Khusrau I's Lazic war. But, though he admitted Hun tribes, to Khusrau is also attributed the fortification of several sites around Tiflis – Gardman, Sughdabīl, and al-Lāl. By that time a substantial number of Iranians were settled in this region; Khusrau's imposition of direct rule had probably brought numerous civilians, along with troops and officials. Thus the tradition of St Eustace depicts Persian shoemakers living in Mtskheta, observing their own religion and customs. Some of these immigrants to the empire's frontier may have been adapting to the local culture when they converted to Christianity.

From the Kur, the trade route crossed the mountain passes to the Phasis (Rioni) and followed a difficult route along the river. At the head of navigation lay the border fort of Sarapana. As the road continued to Sebastopolis (Phasis) it received the road from Armenia through the country of the Tzani mountaineers.[4] Given the commercial and strategic value of Machelonia (Lazica),[5] it formed a natural target for Shāpūr I and Khusrau I. A Scythian Iranian minority, the Sacani (Sacasani), already lived among the population of Laz- and Mingrelian-

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus xxv.7.9. [2] xi.3.5.
[3] See Procopius, *Wars* viii.11.22–5; *Anecdota* ii.29; viii.5–6; xi.5.
[4] *Tab. Peut.* and Procopius, *Wars* ii.29.14–18.
[5] Strabo xi.2.17; Procopius, *Wars* ii.28.

speaking Caucasians; and the city of Siganeum (Sicanabris) lay on the coast road south of Phasis. From these people derived the Sasanian name for Shāpūr's protectorate over this region, Sigān. But probably few western Iranians reached this region except during Khusrau I's occupation. The Phasis road was improved to accommodate Iranian cavalry and elephants but the king was unable to establish his authority and plant Iranian colonies while transporting numbers of Laz.[1]

The most pressing threat to Iran from the Alan and Hun nomads came from the Caspian route. Shāpūr I's province-list therefore separates the Caspian shore from the subject kingdom of Ar(r)ān (Parthian Ardān; Albania).[2] It formed the province Balāsagān, which extended from Gilān to the Caspian/Albanian/Chol Gates at Darband. It presumably included the lower Araxes plain. Groups of Alans probably settled in this area, e.g., those repulsed from Armenia in 335–6. The increasing numbers of Huns settled around the Gates in the 5th century somewhat eroded Sasanian control; but Kavād reaffirmed it.[3] His wall and foundation of *Pērōz-Kavād in Shirvān prepared for Khusrau I's massive fortification of Darband (Bāb al-Abwāb). To secure his barrier across the coastal plain, Khusrau may have transported some tribes here, besides using local ones. Thus the hereditary commanders he appointed at the wall bore such titles as Shirvānshāh, Alānshāh, Fīlānshāh, Baghrānshāh.[4] Kavād and Khusrau also strengthened other defences against the Huns. To Kavād is attributed the foundation of Bailaqān and Barda'a, the major Albanian cities on the road to Iberia from Ardabīl (via Barzand and Warthān). Near Bailaqān, Khusrau founded Karkar.

The north

The Caspian districts of Media formed a distinct geographical and ethnic region of Iran and tended toward political independence. Thus the "Letter of Tansar" represents King Gushnasp, at the beginning of the Sasanian period, as king of Gīlān, Dēlam (Dailam) and Rūyān, Ṭabaristān, and Danbāvand. This region formed the vassal kingdom, later province, of Parishkhwār (Parachoathras) Mountains, or in Book Pahlavī Padishkhwār (Fthasouar).[5] Its major city, Rasht (Cyropolis), must have lain on the Parthian roads to the Araxes and into Atropatene.

[1] Procopius, *Wars* VIII.13.
[2] Cf. Strabo XI.4; Ptolemy V.10.
[3] Procopius, *Wars* I.10.1–16.
[4] Ḥamza, p. 40.
[5] *Bundahishn*, 78.15–79.1; *Zand-ākāsīh* IX.20 (p. 97); Pahlavi *Vīdēvdād/Vendīdād* (ed. H. Jamasp), I.17; Boyce, *The Letter of Tansar*, pp. 30–1 and p. 29, note 7.

By this route Christianity could have reached the Gēls as early as the 2nd century, although it became a diocese only in the sixth. To the south, via Shād Shāpūr (Qazvīn), the Māh highway was accessible. Āmul in Ṭabaristān connected with the highway, through Danbāvand, and also communicated with Gurgān. The 20 foundations referred to in *Shahristānīhā ī Ērān*[1] might be fortifications built between the reigns of Yazdgard II and Khusrau I. A threat to Parishkhwār then existed from the Hun tribes of the Causcasus and especially from the Chol and Kidarites above Gurgān. The city Sāriya on the Gurgān road was probably made such a defensive point.

Parishkhwār was notable for the persisting of the non-Iranian substrate within its population. These people were generally termed Anēr, Strabo's Anariacae. In the west of the province, the Iranian Gēls, who were noted warriors,[2] dwelt in the coastal plain; their city Varna lay near the corner of the Caspian.[3] The Caspii themselves had been driven into the mountains. Next, to the east, lived the Cadusians, apparently mingled with the Gēls; they dwelt from the coast into the mountains.[4] The non-Iranian Amardi (Mardi) continued to inhabit the Āmul region, although Phraates I had transported some to guard the Caspian Gates of Media. They were, however, mingled with the Tapurians, who had been transported there from Parthyene. Between the Āmul (Amardus) river and the bay of Gurgān lived more non-Iranians, the Amariacae and Dribices. By Sasanian times these latter tribes were probably merging with Iranians into a common Māzan population. A gloss on *Vidēvdād* 1.17 would include the Dēlam in the substrate of western Parishkhwār.

The adjoining Sasanian province of Māh, the core of Media, was noted for its Iranian mountain tribes, which doubtless also contained non-Iranian elements. The transhumance of Māh was continuous with that of the neighbouring provinces to north and south. Thus the tribes of the Alburz mountains ranged into Atropatene,[5] while the Carduchi (Gordyaei) ranged eastward into it from southern Armenia.[6] The general term Cossaei designates the various Zagros tribes of Māh.[7] Hence it may include the Cyrtii (possibly true Kurds), who ranged south into Pārs, the Sagartii near the Zagros Gates, and the Gōrīg (Gūrān) in the same region. The independent "Dolomites" who fought

1 Markwart, *Catalogue*, 28.
2 Ammianus Marcellinus XVII.5.1.
3 Ptolemy VI.2.
4 Strabo XI.8.8.
5 Strabo XI.13.3.
6 Ptolemy, *loc. cit.*
7 Strabo XI.13.6; XVI.1.13.

in Lazica[1] were probably from these or other Māh tribes. *Shahristānīhā ī Ērān* places three "mountain-rulers" in western Māh at Nihāvand, Vīsitūn, and Dēnabārān.[2]

The Iranian empire's principal highway to the east entered Māh behind Ḥulwān. The first city on the Parthian road was Bagastāna (Bīsutūn). Bahrām IV's foundation of Kirmānshāh supplied another major station and a link with the north-south road through Dēnabārān (Dīnavar). Just before Concobar (Kangāvar), the highway left "Lower" for "Upper" Media. On the approach to the capital lay the Parthian customs-house, Bāzīgrabān, and the residence of the dynasty of governors at Adrapana. Hamadān, "the metropolis of Media",[3] continued to form a vital crossroads. It lay on the Stakhr–Artaxata route and the Khūzistān road via Nihāvand. An easterly branch ran to Sāva (*Sevacina) and Qum (Thermantica in *Tab. Peut.*). The latter formed a strong post on the road which followed the verge of the desert from Ray to Yazd. (A Sasanian foundation, Bahrām Gōr, may have lain on the Qum–Karaj road.[4] From Hamadān, the main highway passed, via Āba, to the heavily populated and cultivated district Rhagiana.[5] From its foundation as Seleucid Europus and Parthian Arsacia, the city of Rhagae (Ray) guarded the eastern border of the province. At the "Caspian Gates" through the southwest spur of the Alburz, the highway passed into Abarshahr. Control of the western end of the pass was strengthened by construction of Charax and other towns and settlement of Pratitae tribesmen as well as Amardi.[6]

THE QUADRANT OF THE EAST

The east

The fertile lowlands of Hyrcania (Gurgān)[7] were a highly permeable frontier with the nomadic tribes east of the Caspian. The Dahae had occupied the region in Achaemenian times from their plain of Dihistān. The Aparni clans then followed the road along the upper Atrek into Parthava, renaming that province Abarshahr, "realm of the Aparni".[8] Perhaps some Sacaraucae migrated there in the 2nd century B.C., or else it was the Dahae who founded Sace and Sinica.[9] From the late 4th century A.D., Chol and Kidarite Huns pressed upon the province

[1] Procopius, *Wars* VIII.14.
[2] Markwart, *Catalogue*, 29.
[3] Isidore, 6.
[4] Markwart, *Catalogue*, 27.
[5] Strabo XI.13.7.
[6] Pliny VI.17/44.
[7] Strabo XI.7.2.
[8] *Bundahishn*, p. 233.15; *Zand-ākāsīh* XXXV.42 (p. 299).
[9] Ptolemy VI.9.

from Dihistān and sought to follow the road to Māh. From the reign of Yazdgard II, periodic campaigns were necessary to contain their penetration within the province.

The city of Astarābād, Ptolemy's "metropolis of Hyrcania", lay on the Parthian main highway. It may also, particularly in an independent Hyrcania after *c.* 50 A.D., have shared in the trade which avoided Parthian control. The Kushāns, as mediators of the Chinese and Indian overland trade, dealt with the Aorsi kingdom as well as with the Parthians. Goods were transported through Sughd to Khwarazm, then west to the Caspian coast; for the first stage, the Oxus may have been used, as well as the caravan routes.[1] Hyrcania could have offered an alternative, land route to Armenia via Parishkhwār.

The Parthian highway reached Hyrcania through the western districts of Abarshahr, Choarene (Khuvār) and Comisene (Qūmis). Semina (in Ptolemy) (Simnān) probably formed a station between Apameia (Khuvār) and the crossroads of Hecatompylus (Dāmghān). This foundation of the Seleucids, Parthians, and Sasanians functioned throughout as a key defensive centre: Yazdgard II made it "a strong border-post of that quarter among the marauding Chol".[2] From it the eastern road to Tōs (Ṭūs) continued through Bisṭām. A northerly road from Hecatompylus to Tagae[3] then crossed the mountains to Catippa or Casape (in Ptolemy) (Astarābād). The highway traversed the plain of the Gurgān river and re-entered Abarshahr in the district Astauene (Ustuvā). Its stations there included Stai (Simalgān) and Asaac (in Isidorus) or Arsace (in Pliny)[4] (Kūchān), the early capital of the Arsacids. Along the Kāsp (Kashaf) river the middle road to Harēv (Herāt) ran through Sousia (in Arrian) (Tōs) and Oscandati – the district Asfand and city Farhādgird. In this crossroads district connected the western Harēv road from Dāmghān via Khusrujird or further north through the Juvain district. On that road, the Sasanian foundation of Nēv-Shāpūr (Abarshahr) was founded by one or both of the first two Shāpūrs. It formed a more secure administrative centre than Tōs, particularly during the later incursions of Hephthalites and Turks; both cities had become bishoprics in the 5th century. Near Nēv-Shāpūr, at Rīvand, the Sasanian Fire Burzēn-mihr succeeded the Parthians' foundation at Arsace.

From Arsace the northern road of Abarshahr was reached at Par-

[1] Pliny VI.19/52.
[2] Markwart, *Catalogue*, 18.
[3] Polybius X.29.3.
[4] VI.29/113.

thaunisa, i.e., Nisaea (Alexandropolis) in "the fine district of Parthyena".[1] (The village Saphri was apparently the dividing point of the routes to Tōs and to Nisā from Hyrcania.) Nisā flourished as a major city on the frontier with the nomadic Dahae and Sakas. It was joined to Marv, toward the eastern frontier, by a chain of other cities. In its own district were Gathar and Siroc. The region of the Tajand river formed the district Apavarcticena; it contained the cities Apavarctica (Abīvard), Ragau, and Dara (Dareium). From Marv ran the eastern road to Harēv and probably a route to the Kashaf river via Siracena[2] (Sarakhs). The prosperity of Parthian Parthyena and Apavarcticena indicates full exploitation of water resources and successful containment of the neighbouring nomads at that time.

From Asfand, Harēv was approached through the Zām district and the station Asbana. The Harī river was, like the Murghāb, extensively used for irrigation; and so it supported a heavy population.[3] Strabo[4] cites its abundant wine-production. Other cities in the region of Harēv (Alexandria) itself were Candac, Artacauan, and Apameia. Shāpūr I added to these, or perhaps refounded one, as Pūshang; and there he bridged the Harī. The capital itself was a vital point of administration and of communications toward Bactria, India, and Sagistān. The Parthians, in holding it, were able to channel the Sacarauca migration to the south. The Sasanians, in losing it after Pērōz's defeat, left western Abarshahr (Kūhistān) open to Hephthalite penetration. Like Marv, with which it was connected by a road through Vādgēs (Bādghīs), Harēv had become a bishopric by 424. Ardashīr's foundation in Vādgēs probably helped secure the road. That flourishing district, "full of trees and verdure"[5] was itself a bishopric in the 6th century. A north-easterly road to Bactria connected Harēv with the Balkh–Bāmiyān road to Ortospana, which was apparently between Kapiśa and Kabul. Harēv thus shared in the Indian trade as well as the Chinese; Chang K'ien attributed to it the same coins, trade goods, and weapons as in Kashmir.

Southward from Harēv, one reached the first important city of Sagistān at Propasta (Phra, Frāh, Farah). A shorter route to this city from Hecatompylus or Tagae ran farther to the west. The two stations recorded in *Tabula Peutingeriana*, Palitas (Paligas in Ravennas Anonymus) and Parhe, were identified by W. Tomaschek with Bardaskan and

[1] *Ibid.* [2] Ptolemy, *loc. cit.* [3] Pliny VI.25/93. [4] XI.10.1.
[5] *Bundahishn*, p. 79.3–4; *Zand-ākāsīh* IX.22 (p. 97).

Turbat-i Ḥaidarī. These followed the probable station of Bīyārjumand. The route continued through Zūzan and may have converged with the Harēv–Frāh road or have paralleled it south from Mandal. Caravan routes crossing or branching from this road reached the Sasanian city of Kāyin and continued on to the frontier of the province with the desert of Kirmān – the districts of Ṭabas, Khūr, and Bīrjand.

Adjoining Harēv province, that of Marv centred similarly on its river, the Margus (Murghāb), although a lesser population was supported. Isidore calls Marv "well-watered" but states there were no villages.[1] Strabo[2] notes the suitability of the soil for viticulture but also the nearness of the desert. The city of Marv (Antiochia) was connected in commerce and communications with Bukhārā and Samarqand. Having served the Parthians as a defence against the Sakas, it became the seat of the Sasanian Kushānshāhs; and it probably remained a co-capital of Kushānshahr, as well as a mint, after the occupation of Balkh. With the ascendance of the Kidarite Huns *c.* 375, followed by the Hephthalites, Marv again became a strategic frontier-post. As an economic and political base, it served the dissemination of Manichaeism already in Mānī's lifetime. Christianity was established there by Shāpūr II's reign; and missions proceeded on to Tukhāristān and to Transoxiana. The defensive capacity of Marv in later Sasanian times was probably strengthened by foundations such as Sāsānjird and Khusraushāh.

Bahrām V's foundation of Marv-ī Rōd[3] secured the Balkh–Harēv road against the Hephthalites and helped protect the Marv–Harēv road. The boundary, at least officially, with Kidarite and Hephthalite Tukhāristān ran through the mountains of Gōzgān (Hu-shi-kien), where horses were raised in abundance. Ṭāliqān was the border-station on the Balkh road. The more easterly cities of *Shābūragān (Shaburqān) and Anbār were probably third- or fourth-century foundations along the alternative routes from Ṭāliqān to Balkh.

The Sasanian province of Kushānshahr centred on Tukhāristān, from Tirmidh to Pishkabūr (Peshawar). Shāpūr I, at least, exerted authority "as far as the borders of Kash (Kāshghar), Sughd, and Shāsh (Tāshkent)".[4] The trade routes out of Central Asia thus passed into Sasanian control. Nevertheless the Kushānshāh governors respected the cultural and economic ties of Tukhāristān with northern India by issuing coinage on the Kushān gold standard and weight. The

[1] Isidore, 14. [2] *Loc. cit.* XI.10.1. [3] Markwart, *Catalogue*, 11.
[4] Shāpūr's Ka'ba-yi Zardusht inscription, Parthian 2, Greek 4; A. Maricq, "Res Gestae Divi Saporis", pp. 306–7.

Sasanians thus succeeded the Kushān dynasties in directing the flow of trade to the west and to the south until the Kidarites and Hephthalites, in turn, supplanted them.[1]

The routes toward India through Tukhāristān are described by Hsüan-Tsiang. Balkh, as the centre of a prosperous grain-growing district and crossroads for the Iranian and Indian roads, remained an administrative centre and mint-city from Kushān to Hephthalite times. Commerce reached it from the city of Tirmidh on the Oxus and the district of Chaghāniyān. An easterly road ran to Badakhshān through the fertile districts of Khulm and Varvālīz (Varzān, Qunduz). Proceeding south from the latter, one passed through the district of Baghlān. This route up the Qunduz river led to Samangān and on past the old Kushān site of Bagolang (Surkh Kotal). Eastward lay the Khawak pass. The Panjshīr then provided a route to the Paropamisadae mountains and to Kabul. The district of this route was Fo-li-shi-sa-t'ang-na, i.e., *Parshistān. Its inhabitants were probably the Parsii and Parsietae tribesmen[2] – possibly Pashtūns. Through Kabul and Peshawar the Sasanians controlled the roads into India via the Khaibar (Khyber) pass or along the Kabul river through Laghmān and Swāt (*Tab. Peut.*). The Sasanians may have destroyed the Kushān city of Kapīśa in order to strengthen their position. At least one Sasanian foundation occurred in this area; Jāvēd-Shāpūr was perhaps in the vicinity of either Kapīśa or Jalālābād.

The alternative route from Balkh to Kābul followed the river of Bactria to Bāmiyān. From this pasture district (hence its name Aspacora in *Tab. Peut.*), one road crossed the Shibar pass to the Ghurband river and *Parshistān. For the station named Parthona in *Tabula Peutingeriana* (Parsiana in Ptolemy), Tomaschek suggested Parwān, at the juncture of the Ghurband and Panjshīr.[3] Off this east-west road, a southerly route led through Zāwulistān to the Helmand and followed that river into Sagistān (*Tab. Peut.*). From Ortospana (Kabul), a southerly road reached Ghazna and continued to Kandahār.[4]

The south-east

The province of Kirmān was the last one on the Gulf that was essentially Iranian in population; beyond lay a transitional zone becoming increasingly Indian in people and culture. Kirmān was oriented toward

[1] [On trade and trade routes see also pp. 738ff]. [2] Ptolemy VI.18.

[3] Cf. Tomaschek "Zur historischen Topographie von Persien" I, p. 206.

[4] Strabo XI.8.9.

Fārs and Māh through its commerce, whether by sea or along its roads to Stakhr and to Hamadān. Strabo[1] indicates the closeness of its people's customs to those of "the Persians and Medes". Settlers may have come from the western provinces particularly when the region formed part of the Persis kingdom. The eastern boundary of the province was then extended east from Ra's al-Kūh to about Ra's Jaddī.[2] Under the Sasanians it was stabilized at Chāh Bahār Bay and the port of Tīz. While continuing to receive western Iranian settlers, Kirmān also sheltered nomads, both Iranians and older indigenous peoples. The western mountains were the home of the Balōch, to whom is attributed one of the seven "mountain-rulers". They ranged across the province and also into Fārs. The Jut tribes were descendants of the Yutiya (Outii) of the Achaemenian empire. Farther east were other non-Iranians. The Bāriz lived in the mountains north of the Rūdbār, while the Kōfich (Akaufaciya) inhabited the Bashāgird range leading toward Makrān. Arabs probably were attracted across the straits from Macae territory to the coast of Armysia (Harmozia) already in the period of Persis. This fertile district, which centred on the Amanis (Mīnāb) river, may have contained the busy port of Ommana (Omana);[3] the city was later known as, or succeeded by, Harmouza (Hurmuz). The settlement of Arabs continued under the Sasanians through migration or, as in Shāpūr II's reign, transportation.

Through its desert districts to the east and north to the Biyābānak oases near Ṭabas, Kirmān bordered on Sagistān and Abarshahr. A road crossed the northern districts from the frontier of Māh and Parthau at Yazd. Its probable route to Nih and Zrang in Sagistān was via Kūhbanān, Bacinora (Rāvar), and across the desert through Pharca (Dih-i Salm). Other desert tracks presumably joined Kūhbanān, Bacinora, and Arate with Ṭabas and the southern district of Abarshahr, called Modomastica[4] and including Khūr, Khusp, and Bīrjand. A second lateral highway, running from Stakhr, entered Kirmān's capital district of Pantyene (*Tab. Peut.*). Shīragān (Sīrjān), "City of Kirmān", was founded or refounded by one of the Sasanian Kirmānshāhs.[5] Its function as a mint city (with the sign *shy*) indicates its economic rôle, in addition to the agricultural importance of its district. The highway continued to Archiotis (Jīruft) and through the Rūdbār district on to the Bampūr

[1] xv.2.14. [2] Ptolemy vi.8.
[3] See above, p. 756 and Pliny vi.32/14–19.
[4] Ptolemy vi.6. [5] Markwart, *Catalogue*, 39.

river. Two stations, Caumatis and Aradarum, lay on this route, which continued into Paradene (in Ptolemy) (Parazene in Ravennas Anonymus), the Sasanian Pārdān. The Sasanian border-station on the Bampūr river was *Puhl-pahrag (Fuhl-fahra). From here, a southerly route would have joined it with Qaṣrqand and Tīz in Makrān. A north-westerly route would reach the north-eastern frontier-station *Pahrag (Fahraj) of Bam.

Other probable Sasanian foundations mark the routes of Kirmān. The port of Hurmuz (probably Hsüan-Tsiang's modest-sized but wealthy city Ho-mo) could send its imports via Valāshgird to Jīruft and the southern highway. In return it may have shipped out some of the abundance of grain and dates grown in its own district and in the Rūdbār. Jīruft also connected with a central Kirmān route: one could enter the province from Stakhr at Shahr-i Bābak and continue through the mountains to Unās (Bahrāmābād). Here a south-easterly road from Yazd and Kirmānshāhān continued to Ardashīr's stronghold of Veh-Ardashīr (Bardasīr).[1] Perhaps a co-capital of the Kirman-shāhs, Veh-Ardashīr protected the routes into Fārs and may have aided commerce in the province as a mint-city. From it the central road reached Bam (with a branch to Jīruft) and *Pahrag. From the latter, a second Kirmān route into Sagistān approached Zrang from the south.

The Sasanian province Sagistān combined Achaemenian Zranka (Drangiana) and Haraxwati (Arachosia). The influx of Sakas in the late 2nd century B.C., who were followed by some Parthians, had reshaped the region's older population pattern.[2] These Iranians pushed east of the Helmand into "White India", penetrating to the western (or "Saka") bank of the Indus. Like the Yüeh-chih in the occupation of Bactria, they thus entered the expanding sphere of Indian and Buddhist culture. This eastern influence, already felt in Aśoka's reign, persisted through the decline of Sasanian control. Buddhism remained in Ghazna and Kandahār after the Zābul (Jaguḍa) and other Hephthalite tribes had occupied the upper Helmand region south to Zamīn Dāvar and beyond.

While Sagistān could, in general, be called the land of wind and sands, the basins of the Farah, Khwāsh, and Helmand rivers were extensively cultivated and populated. Ample crops of wheat, barley, dates, as well as animal fodder, were produced with the aid of canal systems; the Hāmūn supported fishing villages along its shore. Ardashīr's

[1] Markwart, *Catalogue*, 40. [2] Strabo xv.2.9.

refoundation of Zrang[1] formed the communications centre and capital of the province (also a bishopric by 424). There the Sagānshāh governed with a suzerainty extending to the limits of the old Saka migration in the provinces Hind and Tūrān. From Harēv, Zrang was reached through Propasta. This city's district, Anauon,[2] formed part of Parthian Harēv (Aria) and apparently extended to the north shore of the Hāmūn. The road passed through Juvain (*Gabiana in Ravennas Anonymus; Isidore's Gari?), and the city Bis (older Bigis) was also in the area. The Kirmān northern road, coming from Nia (Nih; Ptolemy's Inna?), merged with the Harēv road. The highway continued to Zrang through Coroc/Carcoe/Karkūya.

Departing from Zrang, one might choose three other routes. To the south-west, *Pahrag could be reached across the desert via Spēd (Ispī, Sanīg). To the north-east lay the Bāmiyān road. It proceeded up the Khwāsh river through the town of Khwāsh (Cosata, Casta); it turned east to the Helmand, probably skirting the mountains and reaching the river above Dartal. A road from Bust presumably joined it at the station Thubrassene (Ptolemy's Tribazina?); from there it continued up the Helmand and into Tukhāristān. The third route from Zrang followed the Erymandus (Helmand) through the district Paraetacene (Rūdbār). To Isidore this was Sacastana proper, as distinct from Zarangiana. He attributes to it four cities: Barda, Min, Palacenti, and the royal residence Sigal (Sigara in Ptolemy). These perhaps prospered on the river commerce between Bust and Zrang as well as on agriculture. Bust (Biyt, Para-beste) was the first city of "White India" or Arachosia; and its district along the Helmand tributaries supported other cities, such as Pharazana (Farsana), Rhizana, and Choaspa.[3] Beyond the Arghandāb river, the road reached Kandahār (Alexandropolis) and the major crossroads of Panjvāy. This city was probably the Achaemenian provincial capital and the district was called Arachosia in Pliny, Arachoti in Strabo, Arachotus in Ptolemy, Chorochoad in Isidore and Rakhwad in *Shahristānīhā i Ērān*,[4] with Rukhwadh as the name of the diocese. A south-easterly road led from it into Turān and, via the Bolan pass, into Hind; and a north-easterly road ascended the Tarnak and Ghazna rivers to Ghazna and on to Kabul.[5] Along the latter route was the provincial capital in the Parthian period, an Alexandria, "metropolis of Arachosis".[6] A Euthydemid

[1] Markwart, *Catalogue*, 38. [2] Isidore, 16. [3] Ptolemy VI.19, 20.
[4] Strabo XI.8.9. [5] Markwart, *Catalogue*, 35.
[6] Isidore, 19; see Tarn, pp. 471–2, on its emendation; Ptolemy VI.20; Arrian III.28.4.

foundation, Demetrias, was somewhere to the south, perhaps at Kalāt-i Ghilzai. If Isidore is emended and Ptolemy assumed to have designated Kandahār (Alexandropolis) as "Alexandria" (as his co-ordinates indicate), then Arrian's Alexandria may well be Ptolemy's Ga(u)zaca (*Ganzaca). Ghazna (Ho-si-na), "City of Zāwulistān"[1] would have made a suitable capital in Alexandrine as in Hephthalite times. It dominated the Panjvāy–Kabul road; and its district extended to the Helmand and the Zrang–Bāmiyān route. On that river lay the city which, in the 7th century, formed Ghazna's co-capital. Ho-sa-la might be identical either with Ptolemy's Azola or else, following A. Cunningham's suggestion, Guzār-istān.[2] Between these fortified cities abundant crops of wheat and fruit were grown, despite the mountainous terrain. As in the rest of Sagistān, a system of irrigation canals was well developed. Hsüan-Tsiang observed the growing of turmeric and assafoetida as well. The western Iranian influence on the region appears in the pilgrim's noting of a different (i.e., non-Indic) writing and language. The cities apparently housed, besides Buddhist monks, Zoroastrian mages. The latter could appropriately be described as people who daily recited several myriad words.

Most of the eastern frontier of Sagistān consisted of hill and mountain ranges, whose independent inhabitants separated that province from the upper Indus. In the south-east the province extended to the Pīshīn hills (Vālishtān). Beyond, the road from Panjvāy entered Hind province in the district of Ispinjāy (Fa-la-na) as it proceeded toward the Indus. The former of these two regions was well-irrigated and cultivated and so supported a substantial population. The latter, while more mountainous and wilder, was also settled and farmed. Through the mountains to the west, reaching south through Turān, ranged the Qīqān (Ki-kiang-na) tribes. Essentially independent, they perhaps gave a loose fealty to the Sasanians through the rulers of Sagistān and Turān. They raised abundant sheep and horses. Some of the latter, especially, may have been intended for the Indian market, which was eager for Iranian mounts.

The kingdom of Turān was included in the Sagānshāh's authority. It probably extended from the Bolān pass through the Budahah district and the Pab and Kirthar ranges to a vague border with Makrān and Hind near Daibul. From Kīzkānān (Kalāt) in the tribal country, it extended as far as the Hind plain. Hsüar-Tsiang calls the region Pi-to-shi-lo. It was heavily populated, and its people spoke a distinct Indic

[1] Markwart, *Catalogue*, 37.

[2] Beal II, p. 283, note 2.

dialect. Abundant wheat and beans were grown but little fruit, due to the cold climate. The main city and stronghold of the province was Bauterna (Quzdār). This city was the province's principal station on the north-easterly road from Makrān and Pārdān, which continued to Hind. The first city of Hind on this route was Qandābīl, modern Gandava ('O-fan-ch'a); the station Cotrica (*Tab. Peut.*) was probably nearby. A northerly road to Sībī led toward Sagistān (through or north of the Bolān pass) and to Fa-la-na. The easterly route of *Tabula Peutingeriana* continued to the Indus across the Hind plain; the station Ochirea was at or near Shikārpūr. The road crossed the Indus to Phara, which must also have connected downstream with the Saka-Parthian capital of Hind, Minnagara (Binnagar). The road continued north along the Indus and Hydaspes to its terminus at Alexandria Bucephala (Jhelum or Jalālpūr).

Shāpūr I's province-list seems to imply actual contact between the provinces Hind and Kushānshahr. Hence the former, extending from the Indus delta, may then have reached along the traditional geographical boundary of Iran and India toward Peshawar. The loss of Peshawar to the Kidarites weakened the Sasanian presence, and Hsüan-Tsiang's Sin-tu does not go north of the Sutlej juncture. The plain of the united river supported a heavy Indian population, who grew wheat and millet and raised cattle, sheep, and camels. Direct access to the region was possible over the Sagistān and Makrān roads for, e.g., the reputed campaigns of Shāpūr II, Bahrām V, and Khusrau I and II. Foundations such as Shapūr's Farshābūr probably helped secure these routes. In the delta, the major port-activity shifted from Barbaricum (Barbaria); this city had, by its connection with Minnagara, given emphasis to the left-bank road to Kushān territory. Daibul, the Sasanian port and market-town, lay near the western (Sagapa or Pitti) mouth of the Indus and connected with the Makrān road. Another instrument of Sasanian control was the extensive deportation of "Zuṭṭ". This term was applied indiscriminately to the Indian tribes of the south-east frontier, such as the Qīqān and Mayid.

Between Kirmān and the largely Indian regions of Turān and Hind were the southern transitional provinces, Pārdān and Makurān (Makrān). The interior hill ranges of Gedrosia and the intervening basin of the Mashkel formed the vassal kingdom of Pārdān. While farming was probably carried out around the Mashkel and its *hāmūn*, apparently no cities were supported in that area. Ptolemy's six cities of northern

Gedrosia seem to belong to Turān. *Tabula Peutingeriana* gives two stations along the Stakhr–Quzdār road, which followed the valley of the Rakhshān river. The road entered the province after *Puhl-pahrag (Parazene), which apparently belonged to Pārdān in the Seleucid period. The route proceeded to the station Bestia Deselutia, possibly the area of Sib or Mūrt on the Mashkel. A branch road here ran south to the Makrān–India road, and perhaps another branch existed to Zrang. The easterly highway continued to Rana (Rainna) in the area of the Rhamnae people (at or near Panjgūr) and to Quzdār. Emendation of *Tabula Peutingeriana* would yield a more northerly route through Jālq.[1]

The province Makurān (Makrān) extended from Chāh Bahār to near Daibul and from the arid coastal flats to the Central Makrān range. From Achaemenian times its population combined Iranians, including the Maka (Myci), with the indigenous Fish-eaters and with Indians, such as the Arbies and Oreitae.[2] The coastal districts provided some grazing for cattle and sheep; but the inland valleys produced much wheat, beans, dates, and wine-grapes. Irrigation was complemented by careful channeling and storage of the summer rains' runoff.[3] The province had a western port Tesa (Tīz; older Talmena); perhaps Port Cuiza and Badara ("Gwādar") also continued under the Parthians and Sasanians. Inland was the fertile and heavily settled Kej valley, the region Long-kie-lo.[4] A highway to the Indus ran from the capital, Su-nu-li-chi-fa-lo, which is probably Qaṣarqand and Achaemenian Poura.[5] Indians, both Hindu and Buddhist, lived in this city; through it both land and sea trade could pass to *Puhl-pahrag and the Kirmān highway. Along the Makrān route to India lay the stations Rhana (Rana, again after the Rhamnae?), and Alcon. The lower Indus was reached at Paricea (perhaps Ptolemy's district Parisina). Hsüan-Tsiang knew the eastern Makrān coast as 'O-tien-p'o-chi-lo; it centred on the Arabis (Porali) river and in the 1st century A.D. had a major port, Oraea, on Sonmiani Bay. At or near later Bela, the Oreite village Rhambacia had been refounded as an Alexandria.[6] This city may be indicated by Ptolemy's Arbis or Parsis Metropolis (after the Parsirae people); and it may also be Hsüan-Tsiang's Khie-tsi-shi-fa-lo. It cannot be the station Rhana but must have been on the Makrān–India route. A northerly road joined it with Quzdār and the Pārdān–Hind highway.

[1] Cf. Tomaschek, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
[2] Strabo xv.2.1; Arrian vi.21.3–4.
[3] Cf. Arrian xv.2.3.
[4] Cf. the Dangalae people of Pliny vi.25/92.
[5] Arrian vi.24.1.
[6] Arrian vi.21.5.

CHAPTER 21 (*a*)

TIME-RECKONING

I. ELEMENTS OF TIME-RECKONING

Every method of time-reckoning uses and combines three natural time elements: day, lunation, and year. Since the day is the indispensable component of time measurement, three combinations of natural time units are possible: (**a**) days plus lunations; (**b**) days, lunations, and year; and (**c**) days and year. The extant evidence shows that the Persian, Macedonian and Parthian rulers of Iran, from the 6th century B.C. until the 3rd century A.D., used the second scheme (**b**). The Sasanians in the 3rd to 7th centuries A.D. used the third scheme (**c**), as do the Zoroastrians to this day. Before explaining the intricacies and history of these calendar types in pre-Islamic Iran, some comments on the chronological terms used in this chapter may be of use.

For the purposes of time-reckoning, the "day" includes the night-period between two successive daylights. The peoples who used the moon as a marker of time, for instance the Babylonians, counted the complete night and day as a single "day", (from onset of evening to onset of evening), whereas the Zoroastrians, who disregarded the lunar reckoning entirely, insisted that the calendar day was the period between two sunrises.[1]

The waxing and the waning of the moon recur about every 29½ days, and the calendar month began at the appearance of the new moon. As its visibility depends on many accidental and variable factors, e.g. the cloudiness of the sky, the month for the purpose of the calendar was counted as having twenty-nine or thirty days.

The succession of seasons which regulates man's life and work depends on the (apparent) movement of the sun. The earth makes a complete circle around the sun in about 365¼ days. Therefore, the solar year is longer than twelve lunations by about eleven days, and a purely lunar year would soon be in disagreement with the seasons. For this reason, the peoples using the second calendar type (**b**), for instance the Babylonians, adjusted their year of twelve lunar months by adding from time to time an extra month. By the time of the Persian conquest

[1] Ginzel, p. 288.

(539 B.C.), they already knew the equation of 235 months = nineteen solar years, and from the beginning of the 5th century, established a cycle of seven intercalations every nineteen years. In this way, their New Year on 1 Nisannu, just like Passover and Easter today, always fell in the early spring-time, while the beginning of every month roughly agreed with the new moons. The number of days in this lunisolar year was now 353 (354) and now 383 (384). This fact demonstrates most clearly the character of a calendar year: it is a conventional time-unit, the length and beginning of which can be fixed arbitrarily. Until 1753, 25 March was New Year's Day in England. As a matter of fact, except for the day, the standard units of chronology, though based on natural phenomena, are matters of convention and convenience.

Thus, using the third type of calendar (**c**), the Egyptians, Zoroastrians, and the Sasanians could choose the year of definite, but erroneous (with respect to the sun) length of 365 days. This year was conveniently divided into twelve portions ("months") of thirty days each, plus five extra days, the *epagomenai*, as the Greeks called them. Shorter than the sun year by about ¼ day, this schematic year advanced one day on the course of the sun every four years. For instance, 1 Fravartin, the first day of the Sasanian year, fell on 16 June in A.D. 632 and on 15 June in A.D. 636. In this way, it "wandered" through the whole Julian year.

2. COUNTING OF YEARS

Whatever may be the length or nature of a calendar year, society's needs demand that its place in the passage of time, i.e. its distance from the present, should be recognizable. In the time of Cyrus, who united the lands of Iran, and for centuries afterward, kings and their subjects generally dated events and documents by reference to the regnal year, as "in the thirteenth year of Darius (II)".[1] This scheme of dating had two advantages: it was intelligible throughout the entire realm, and could be prolonged to the present with relative ease. For example, when the mother of the last Babylonian king, Nabonidus, wished to indicate her age, she stated that she was born in the twentieth year of Asurbanipal, King of Assyria, lived to his forty-second, and last, year, to the third year of his successor, and so on, until the succession of Nabonidus, that is, for ninety-five years. To reckon her age, she needed seven time references.[2] In the city of Ashur, or in the Athens

[1] Thucydides VIII. 58.

[2] C. J. Hadd "The Harran Inscription of Nabonidus", *Anatolian Studies* VIII (1958), p. 47.

of her time, where each year was named after an annual magistrate, she would have needed ninety-five year-dates to recount the same fact.

Yet the use of regnal years for the purpose of chronology had its drawbacks. The regnal year naturally starts at the accession of a king and runs until the return of the same day-date in the course of time. E.g., Edward VII of Great Britain became king on 22 January 1901. Thus, his ninth year began on 22 January 1909 and ended on 21 January 1910. But he died on 6 May of 1910. Thus, his tenth year lasted only about 3½ months. How should a chronicler reckon this rump of a regnal year? If he counted it as the tenth year of Edward VII and then spoke of the first year of George V, he would soon lose his chronological bearings. For instance, according to their coins, dated by regnal years, five Sasanians between Khusrau II and Yazdgard III ruled during a period of ten years. But in fact, the combined lengths of their reigns was about four calendar years (628–32 A.D.). Thus, the chroniclers had recourse to the device of the "chronographic" (or "historical") year, in which they attributed the whole year in which a sovereign died to himself alone *or* to his successor. To use the same modern example, they would assign the year of 1910 either to Edward VII or George V, but not both.

Tax-collectors and other public officials, however, had to date their records by the years of the reigning sovereign. Thus, they had recourse to another expedient: they subordinated the regnal years to the civil years. As mentioned above, the Achaemenian administration used the Babylonian lunisolar year which began on 1 Nisannu, around the time of the vernal equinox. The scribes reckoned the portion of the regnal year from the royal accession to the next 1 Nisannu as "the beginning of kingship". Then, the regnal years were counted from 1 Nisannu and corresponded to the civil years. Thus a document written in 464 B.C. was dated as follows: "year 21 [*sc.* of Xerxes], the beginning of kingship, when King Artaxerxes (I) sat on his throne".[1] Thus, the first regnal year of Artaxerxes followed the twenty-first and last year of Xerxes' rule. The device of the "accession year" avoided any confusion of dates in tax-records and similar documents.

A caveat must be added. The device of the "accession year" was a Babylonian invention, used in connection with the Babylonian calendar. The Egyptian scribes, using the Egyptian calendar, counted the years of the Pharaoh differently, even if the Pharaoh was a Persian King.

[1] A. E. Cowley (ed. and tr.) *Aramaic Papyri of the fifth century B.C.* (Oxford, 1923), no. 6.

Here, the next full civil year after the accession of a sovereign was counted as his second year. However the dating of the beginning of a reign could vary; for instance, in Egypt the years of Cambyses were counted now from his accession in Persia (530 B.C.) and now from his conquest of Egypt (525 B.C.).[1]

We do not know how the royal years were reckoned at the Persian court, but it seems that here the regnal year ran from the day of the accession to its return in the calendar. Only this hypothesis explains the aberrant year numbers in Thucydides and in the oracles of Zechariah and Haggai.[2]

The chronology of Persian kings from 539/8 onward is now fairly certain, since we have two complementary tools to establish the accession dates of the kings for this period. First, we have the so-called "Royal Canon" wherein the regnal years from Cyrus to Darius III are given according to the Egyptian calendar, and secondly, we have Babylonian documents which are dated according to the Babylonian calendar. For instance, according to the "Royal Canon", Darius II mounted the throne in the Egyptian year beginning 7 December 424 B.C. Babylonian documents allow us to place his accession between December 424 and mid-February 423 B.C.

After the Persian kings, there followed Alexander, his successors, and the Seleucids. We do not know how Alexander's years were counted in Iran. But as to the Seleucids, Seleucus I accepted the Babylonian calendar. His son Antiochus I from 292 on was co-regent with his father. After the latter's death, he continued to count his father's regnal years, and his descendants followed his example. Such was the origin of the Seleucid era, which was reckoned from the Babylonian New Year, and began on 3 April 311 B.C. in the countries of the Babylonian calendar, including Iran. The Seleucid court and the Greek cities of the realm, on the other hand, continued to reckon from the anticipated accession date of Seleucus I in the late autumn or early winter of 312. (In fact, Seleucus did not take the diadem before 305/4, but he continued the counting of his satrapal years in Babylon after assuming the royal title.) For converting Seleucid dates of Babylonian style into Julian years, the number of the Seleucid year should be subtracted from 312. For Seleucid dates expressed in Greek style, the

[1] Parker and Dubberstein, p. 14.

[2] Thuc. VIII. 58; cf. W. K. Pritchett, "The Thucydidean summer of 411 B.C.", *Classical Philology* LX (Chicago, 1965), pp. 259–61; W. Meritt, "A Persian Date in Thucydides", *ibid.* LXI (1966), pp. 182–4.

Seleucid figure should be subtracted from 313. For instance, the date of a Seleucid letter in Greek which was engraved on stone near Kirmānshāh is "119".[1] By subtracting 119 from 313, we find the date of the letter: 194/3 B.C. When the Seleucid year-number is higher than 311 (or 312), the latter figure should be subtracted from the Seleucid date. For example, a Parthian inscription in Dura-Europos dated "year 522, month Ādur", (in which the author probably used the Babylonian form of the Seleucid year) was written in March–April 212 A.D. (522 − 311 = 211).[2] The Seleucid year 522 began in the spring of 211 A.D.

The Arsacids continued the Seleucid numbering of years by equating their year 1 with the Seleucid year 65, that is, 248/7 (or for the Babylonian style 247/6 B.C.). The above conversion rules also apply to the Arsacid era. For instance, the Arsacid year 158 began in the Julian year 249 − 158 = 91 B.C. according to the Greek style, and the Julian year 248 − 158 = 90 B.C. according to the Babylonian style. The court and the Parthian administration in Iran used the Arsacid era.[3] The Babylonian scribes dated by the years of the Seleucid and the Arsacid eras. Greek cities in the Parthian realm clung to the Seleucid era (Macedonian style) which was even used on royal coins minted in Greek cities.

The use of an era in documents makes easier the task of historians. Cuneiform documents on clay from Babylonia and dates on royal coins make it possible to draw up a quite exact chronological list of the Seleucids until the time they lost Babylonia and Iran, *c.* 140–130 B.C.

As to the Arsacids, they all took the throne-name of Arsaces. Therefore, the Babylonian documents only rarely can help us to distinguish between a king and his successor. Furthermore, the practice of using cuneiform writing on clay tablets ended in the 1st century A.D. Coins add some title, like "Theopater", to the legend "King Arsaces", and in this way help the chronologist. But the dates on Parthian coins appear erratically until *c.* 40 B.C. and only irregularly afterwards. Exact synchronisms are rare and not always easy to interpret. Yet, Mānī says that he was born in the year 527 "of the era of Babylonian astronomers", that is, 216/17 A.D., which was also the fifth year of

[1] L. Robert, "Encore une inscription grecque de l'Iran", *CRAI*, 1967, p. 286.

[2] W. B. Henning in R. N. Frye *et al.*, "Inscriptions from Dura-Europos", *Yale Classical Studies* XIV (1955), p. 144.

[3] C. B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period* (New Haven, Conn., 1934), no. 75; Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 33.

Ardavān V and that he received his first revelation in the year 539 = 228/9 A.D., which was the third year of Ardashīr I, the first Sasanian king.[1] Thus Ardavān V became king in the year 212/13 A.D. and lost the throne in 226/7 A.D.

The Sasanians themselves had no era. An inscription dated to "the year 58, forty years of the [royal] fire of Ardashīr, twenty-four years of the fire of Shāpūr" shows that the figure "58" does not indicate the year of a royal era beginning with Ardashīr and continued by Shāpūr I.[2] Christian writers in Syriac, however, used such synchronisms as "in the year 117 of Persian reign, that is, the 31st year of Shāpūr [II], king of kings". But the reference to the year of the Persian rule is here a Syrian imitation of the Seleucid era which remained the usual mode of time-reckoning in Syria. As a matter of fact, these synchronisms, when calculated by later Christian writers, are generally wrong, or at the very least, suspect.[3]

In fact, the Sasanians, as did the Achaemenians, dated by the regnal years of the king. As their civil year was similar to the Egyptian year of 365 days, they (as did the Egyptians) counted the period from the accession to the next civil New Year as the first year of the new sovereign, while his second, third, and further years then coincided with the civil year. As the Sasanian coins do not bear dates of regnal years before the last decades of the fifth century and as the contemporary dated documents are rare, the chronology of the dynasty remains uncertain. It is remarkable that the Sasanians, as well as their officers, were wary of giving chronological references in their inscriptions. Shāpūr I related his victorious campaigns without any mention of dates. The synchronisms known as yet are rare and often obscure. We learn, for instance, that Shāpūr I was crowned on Sunday, 1 Nisan, when the sun stood in the Ram, but we are unable to say whether the coronation happened in 240, or 242 or 243.[4]

[1] E. Honigmann and A. Maricq, *Recherches sur les Res Gestae Divi Saporis* (Brussels, 1953) p. 32 (Mémoires de l'Académie de Belgique XLVII, 4). Cf. A. Heinrichs, "Mani and the Babylonian Baptists", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* LXXVII (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), p. 32.
[2] Frye, p. 199.

[3] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 403; M. Kmosko, in *Patrologia Syriaca* II (Paris, 1907), p. 697; S. H. Taqizadeh, "Zur Chronologie der Sassaniden", *ZDMG* XCI (1937), p. 67; Higgins, pp. 4, 19.

[4] Maricq, reprint (Paris, 1965), pp. 86–90. The synchronism of the coronation and of the first public appearance of Mani as a prophet, in 240, is anyway suspect; see A. Heinrichs and L. Koenen, "Ein griechischer Mani-Codex", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* V (Bonn, 1970), pp. 126ff. [See also ch. 4, p. 118f and ch. 27, pp. 966f.]

3. THE CALENDARS

The earliest extant evidence for the Achaemenian time-reckoning comes from the Behistun inscription of Darius I. Written in Old Persian, in 520 or 519 B.C., this record of winning the empire of Cambyses by Darius gives the exact dates of nineteen events, beginning with the "revolt" of Gaumata, Darius' rival, on the 14th day of the month Viyakhna. In the Akkadian version of the Persian text the same dates are expressed in terms of the Babylonian calendar: 14 Viyakhna becomes 14 Addaru, and so on. Unless we suppose that the official translator mechanically identified Persian with Babylonian months, we must infer from these equations that the Persian government used the Babylonian lunisolar calendar, but that the Babylonian months received Persian names in Iranian records.

This inference is confirmed by the accounting documents of the royal treasury in Persepolis, which cover the period from 510 to 459 B.C. These documents, written in the Elamite language, but dictated in Persian and with the scribes using the Persian names of months, mention several intercalary months which fall in the same years and in the same place within these years as in the Babylonian calendar. It is significant that the Persians also accepted the Babylonian terminology: the intercalary month had no name of its own but simply doubled the preceding ordinary month.[1]

We do not know when the Persian government adopted the Babylonian calendar. For instance, the Achaemenians could have received it from the Elamites, who also in other matters were teachers of the invaders from the far north.[2] Cyrus had been the hereditary Persian ruler in Elam and called himself "King of Anshan" long before he became ruler of Babylon. Nor do we know anything about the pre-Babylonian calendar of the Persians.

The Achaemenians used the Babylonian calendar throughout their empire or, at least, in the western satrapies and Egypt. As the official language of the imperial administration in the provinces was Aramaic,

[1] G. C. Cameron, *Persepolis Treasury Tablets* (Chicago, 1948), pp. 32–6 (Oriental Institute Publications vol. LXV); *idem*, "Persepolis Treasure Tablets Old and New", *JNES* XVII (1958), 161–75; *idem*, "New Tablets from the Persepolis Treasury", *JNES* XXIV (1965), pp. 167–92; R. T. Hallock, "A New Look on the Persepolis Treasury Tablets", *JNES* XIX (1960), 90–100; *idem*, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* (Chicago, 1970).

[2] R. Ghirshman, *Village perse-achéménide* (Paris, 1954), p. 73 (Mémoires de la mission archéologique en Iran, 36); H. Luschey, "Studien zu dem Darius-Relief von Bistun", *AMI* I (1968), p. 92.

the Babylonian months received Aramaic names in Aramaic documents. Aramaic papyri from Egypt attest to the use of the Persian (Babylonian) calendar for the period from 471 to 401, the date of Egyptian rebellion. Recently found, and still unpublished Aramaic papyri from Samaria, further, prove the official use of the same calendar in the Persian Empire till the coming of Alexander the Great.

Alexander's court used the Macedonian calendar, but his administration in Asia probably continued the Persian practice. Seleucus I and his dynasty also accepted the Babylonian calendar at court though they substituted names of Greek months for the Babylonian names in Greek documents; Artemisios now meant Nisannu, and so on. The Parthian kings followed the same practice, as their era, their coins and their documents in Greek show. Yet, the Iranian documents of the Parthian period bring on the problem of the completely different "Zoroastrian" calendar. At this point, we have to turn to the Sasanians, and their calendar.

As already mentioned, the Sasanian year of 365 days was divided into twelve months of thirty days plus five additional days. The months and the thirty days of the month were named after Zoroastrian entities, for instance, the first month Fravardin after the *fravašis*, the mighty and bounteous spirits of the just. The proper name of day remained the same in all months. Thus, the first day of each month was named Ohrmazd after the supreme god Ahura Mazda.

The Sasanian documents, from the inscriptions of Shāpūr I, the second king of the dynasty, to Persian papyri from Egypt, written *c.* A.D. 610 (toward the end of the dynasty) are dated by the royal years, months and days of the "Zoroastrian" calendar.[1] The date of the decisive battle in which Ardashīr, the founder of the dynasty, defeated the last Arsacid king, Ardavān V, is also given according to the "Zoroastrian" calendar by Sasanian tradition as the last day of the month Mihr.[2]

[1] E. Herzfeld, *Paikuli* I (Berlin, 1924), pp. 121–2; Frye, p. 199; G. Gropp, "Die sasanidische Inschrift . . . in Āzarbaidjān" *AMI* I (1968), p. 149; B. Geiger in C. H. Kraeling, *The Synagogue* (New Haven, Conn., 1956), pp. 300–3 (The Excavations of Dura-Europos, final report VIII. 1); O. Hansen, "Die mittelpersischen Papyri", *APAW* 1937, no. 9, p. 20.

[2] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 14. Nöldeke's calculation of the corresponding Julian date (28 April 224 A.D.) is erroneous; he starts from the groundless assumption (of A. von Gutschmid) that in 224 the epagomenae preceded the month Mihr. In fact, in 224 A.D. the last day of the month Mihr corresponded to 24 April. *The Chronicle of Arbela ap.* E. Sachau, *APAW* 1915, no. 6, p. 61 gives Wednesday, 27 Nisan as the date of the same event. Even assuming that this date is exact, we still do not know its Julian equivalent; cf. Higgins, p. 21; Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 14, 411. Cf. pp. 92, 925–6, 1276 on the *Chronicle of Arbela*.

Recent discoveries have revealed, however, that the Parthian kings and their scribes, writing in Iranian languages, already used the same Zoroastrian nomenclature for months and days. A Parthian inscription of Ardavān V is dated as follows: "Year 462, [month] Spendarmat, day of Mihr". A Parthian contract written in the year "300" of the same Arsacid era, refers to the month "Harvatat", that is the third month of the "Zoroastrian" year. The scribes of the Arsacid administration in Nisā, writing in Parthian, again used Zoroastrian names of months and days. The earliest so-dated text of this group is from the year 158 of the Arsacid era, which is 90/89 B.C., three centuries before the rise of the Sasanian dynasty.[1]

But what is the meaning of the Zoroastrian nomenclature to the time-reckoning of the Arsacids? Did they, as the Achaemenians before them, give Iranian names to Babylonian months and days in documents written in Iranian languages? The Manichaeans did it, and the preserved equations prove that the name of the first month of the Persian year (Fravardin) was given to the Babylonian Tashritu in this system.[2] Did the Manichaeans here follow the Arsacid practice? We must keep in mind the possibility that the Arsacids simultaneously used two eras, both starting on 15 April 247 B.C., one in the Babylonian lunisolar style, to be used in cuneiform and Aramaic documents, and another, used in Iranian records, which was reckoned in vague years of the "Zoroastrian" calendar. In the same way, the Islamic Hijra era, from 21 March 622 A.D. still has two styles in Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan: that of the Islamic lunar year and that of solar year. For instance, March of 1962 in Iran fell in the year 1381 of the lunar Hijra era and in the year 1341 of the solar Hijra era.[3]

The Sasanian court, however, abandoned the lunisolar calendar, at least in Iran, for the "Zoroastrian" year. But this year of 365 days, naturally, disagreed with the sun. According to Bīrūnī, and other Arab and later Persian authors, Zoroaster had established the rule that the vague year of 365 days was to be brought in agreement with the sun

[1] Henning, "Tang-i Sarvak", p. 176; H. S. Nyberg, "The Pahlavi Documents from Avroman", *Le Monde Oriental* XVII (1923), p. 189; I. M. Diakonov, V. A. Livshits, "Novye nakhodki dokumentov v Staroi Nise", *Peredneaziatski Sbornik* II (Moscow, 1966), p. 153. The mention of the month Spandarmad in a damaged Aramaic inscription (see Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 24) is erroneous (I owe this information to Prof. M. Boyce).

[2] G. Haloun and W. B. Henning, "The Compendium of the Doctrines . . . of Mani", *Asia Major* III (1952), p. 200.

[3] S. H. Taqizadeh, "Various Eras and Calendars of Islam", *BSOAS* IX (1937–9), p. 905; V. V. Zybulski, *Sovremennye kalendari stran bliżhnego i srednevo vostoka* (Moscow, 1964), p. 127.

by inserting a month of thirty days every 120 years. The place of this extra month in the calendar year was to be changed at every intercalation following the sequence of ordinary months, and the five supplementary days were to be shifted on this occasion behind the month to which the turn of intercalation had proceeded. Thus Yazdgard I (399–402) according to Bīrūnī,[1] or Pērōz I (459–84), as Bīrūnī says elsewhere,[2] rectified the calendar by intercalating two months, so that from this time the epagomenae remained after the eighth month (Ābān). Later sources attributed the last intercalation to Khusrau I or to Yazdgard III, the last Sasanian king.[3]

As Bīrūnī places Zoroaster 1218 years before the accession of Yazdgard III in A.D. 632, we have to believe that the Zoroastrian calendar was rectified by orderly intercalation for twelve-hundred years, an idea which does not strike one as a plausible conjecture. In fact, Bīrūnī's words in his recently published work *al-Qānūn al-Mas'ūdī* make clear that his Zoroastrian informants were not transmitting some venerable tradition, but were advancing a historical hypothesis in order to explain the position of the epagomenal days in the "Zoroastrian" calendar of their time. "The fact", says Bīrūnī,[4] "that at the time of Yazdgard [III] the five supplementary days were located at the end of Ābān proves that no more than eight intercalations had taken place since the time of Zoroaster." As a matter of fact, the historical hypothesis, repeated by Bīrūnī, is refuted by the observation that in all other Iranian calendars of the "Zoroastrian" type, among the Sogdians, the Chorasmians, and "the Transoxianian Magi" the epagomenal days have remained at the end of the year. On the other hand, the late Pahlavī books ignore the principle of intercalation quoted by Bīrūnī. In these Zoroastrian works the sole rule is that the intercalation must be by month and not by days and that the number of inserted months should not exceed five.[5] In other words, the Zoroastrian tradition referred to the occasional intercalation of one or several months, as in the case of the Sasanian king who inserted two months at once.

We are unable to check this tradition of Sasanian intercalation, which would have shifted the position of Sasanian months with reference to the Julian calendar. We know that the Sasanian New Year

[1] "Chronology", 119.
[2] *al-Qānūn al-Mas'ūdī*, I, p. 91.
[3] See pp. 805 ff for further discussion of Sasanian calendar reforms. Ed.
[4] Vol. I, p. 132. I owe this translation to the late M. Minovi. al-Bīrūnī wrote his "Canon Masudicus" in *c.* 427/1036, that is, some 30 years after his "Chronology".
[5] Nyberg, p. 39.

(1 Fravardin) fell on 16 June in the year 632, and we can with reasonable certainty use two Julian synchronisms given in Greek sources for Sasanian dates in A.D. 590 and 628,[1] but we lack reliable synchronisms for the Sasanian calendar before 590.

Thus, we cannot say whether the position of the epagomenae after the eighth month (Ābān) was a Sasanian innovation or an old tradition. As a matter of fact there is no calendar reason for placing the additional days at the end of the year. Our own bissextile day ends February and not December.

The history of the "Zoroastrian" year before the Sasanians remains unknown except the bare fact that the Zoroastrian calendar terminology was already used *c.* 100 B.C. This presumably means that the vague "Zoroastrian" year also functioned in some Iranian society at this date.[2] For Zoroastrian informants of Bīrūnī the 365-day calendar was primeval, but its intercalation was ordained by Zoroaster. Modern scholars have tried to deduce from the "Zoroastrian" calendar itself the date of its invention. They either started from the count of the (fictitious) intercalations, or even simpler, based their calculations on the assumption that the calendar must have started on the vernal equinox. As the rotating year of 365 days returns to its astronomical starting point in 1,460 Julian years, the calculation of the latter was easy. A Byzantine author already stated that the "Zoroastrian" year completed its 1460-year cycle in A.D. 325.[3] The proposed dates for the introduction of the "Zoroastrian" calendar oscillate between 3209 B.C. and A.D. 238. In fact, the calendar is not an exercise in amateur astronomy but a tool the origin and use of which is determined by the needs of the society that practices this time-reckoning. Thus, its history cannot be discovered by the means of arithmetical equations.

The earliest datable reference to the 365-day year in Iran is found in Curtius;[4] when Darius III, in 333 B.C., advanced against Alexander, the army was preceded by sacred fire and the chanting Magi, followed by 365 young men. "Their number was equal to that of the days of the whole year." Does it mean that in 333 B.C. only the Magi, or also the Achaemenid court, made use of the 365-day year? (The Achaemenid administration, as we have seen, worked with the Babylonian lunisolar year.)

[1] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 282, 382.

[2] [See chapter 21 (*b*) for a further discussion of the Zoroastrian calandar.

[3] H. Usener, *Kleine Schriften* III (Leipzig, 1914), p. 360; the story of Narses implies a Sasanian year of 366 days; O. Braun, *Ausgewählte Akten persischer Märtyrer* (Kempten-Munich, 1915), p. 146.

[4] Quintus Curtius, III. iii. 10.

Whether the 365-day year was "Zoroastrian" from the beginning is another question. The year of $30 \times 12+5$ days which disagrees with the sun and disregards the moon, is a pragmatic tool which is convenient for business accounting as well as for calculating celestial phenomena or religious *fasti*. For this reason it also appears in pre-Spanish Peru. In a more simplified form the schematic year neglected the epagomenae and consisted of twelve 30-day units.

The use of this conventional year was widespread. For instance, the Achaemenian administration in Persepolis paid workers according to the scheme of thirty-day months, and the Persian kings were reputed to have 360 concubines.[1] Likewise, the Rigveda refers to the year of 360 days. It is curious that Bīrūnī attributes the same year to the most ancient kings of Persia, the mythical Pīshdādians, though his Zoroastrian informant "improved" on the system by adding the intercalation of a month every five years. It is possible that the change from this schematic year of 360 days to the 365 day year involved a shift in the distribution of festivals throughout the Zoroastrian year.[2]

As to the diffusion of the "Zoroastrian" calendar, Bīrūnī supposes that the example of the Persians was followed by those who had the same religion as the inhabitants of Persia or were their subjects. Yet, the rulers of pre-Islamic Persia, including the Sasanians, never imposed the "Zoroastrian" (or any) calendar on their unwilling subjects. For instance, the Jews under the Sasanians continued to use their lunisolar calendar. In legal documents, the language determined the use of the calendar; a Parthian document referred to a "Zoroastrian" month; a Greek document from the same find was written in the month "Apellaios".[3]

In fact, the geographic distribution of the "Zoroastrian" calendar is rather curious. Besides Iran, it appears in Cappadocia, and in three countries north of Iran: Sogdiana, Chorasmia and Armenia. In these four countries, the supplementary days stayed at the end of the year, and the names of the months and days, though generally Zoroastrian, varied from one country to another. For instance, in Sogdiana, the third month curiously received the Babylonian name "Nisannu".[4]

[1] Quintus Curtius, III. iii. 24, VI. vi. 8; Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, 27. 2; cf. Bickerman, "Zoroastrian Calendar", p. 206.

[2] See pp. 794ff for further discussion.

[3] E. H. Minns, "Parchments . . . from Avroman", *JHS* XXXV (1915), p. 22.

[4] It is sometimes stated that the Caucasian Albanians also used the Zoroastrian month names; cf. e.g. Gray, "On certain Persian and Armenian month-names", p. 337. But the authoritative work of K. V. Trever, *Ocherki istorii kavkaskoi Albanii* (Moscow, 1959), p. 315 does not confirm this opinion.

The simplicity of the 365-day year was probably a factor in its spread. This year disagreed with the seasons, but that did not bother the Iranians, or, for that matter, the Egyptians, who continued to use it for millennia, even after the introduction of the Julian year in Egypt by Augustus. When Mānī, a highly educated man, opposes the solar year of Iran to the lunisolar year of "Non-Iran" he does not even mention the fact that the Iranian year was untrue to the sun.[1] In fact, men lived their life not according to some official time measurements, but in agreement with the seasons and the course of the stars.

Thus, the "Zoroastrian" calendar survived the fall of the Sasanians. The Zoroastrians even have continued to date by the years of the last Zoroastrian king, thus prolonging his imaginary reign through centuries. In this way, we can ascertain that the Persian New Year in A.D. 632 fell on 16 June. The earliest extant evidence for this "era of Yazdgard" is a private inscription from A.D. 664.[2] The era and the Zoroastrian calendar are followed by the Parsis to this day.[3]

[1] W. B. Henning, "Ein manichäisches Henochbuch", *SPAW* 1934, p. 34.

[2] Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 47.

[3] [For a discussion of the Sasanian calendar reforms and tables of the Iranian month and day names see the following chapter.]

APPENDIX

JULIAN DATES OF PERSIAN NEW YEARS[1]

A.D. 220–652

Years A.D.	Persian New Years	Years A.D.	Persian New Years	Years A.D.	Persian New Years	Years A.D.	Persian New Years	Years A.D.	Persian New Years
220	27 Sept.	308	5 Sept.	396	14 Aug.	484	23 July	572	1 July
224	26 —	312	4 —	400	13 —	488	22 —	576	30 June
228	25 —	316	3 —	404	12 —	492	21 —	580	29 —
232	24 —	320	2 —	408	11 —	496	20 —	584	28 —
236	23 —	324	1 —	412	10 —	500	19 —	588	27 —
240	22 —	328	31 Aug.	416	9 —	504	18 —	592	26 —
244	21 —	332	30 —	420	8 —	508	17 —	596	25 —
248	20 —	336	29 —	424	7 —	512	16 —	600	24 —
252	19 —	340	28 —	428	6 —	516	15 —	604	23 —
256	18 —	344	27 —	432	5 —	520	14 —	608	22 —
260	17 —	348	26 —	436	4 —	524	13 —	612	21 —
264	16 —	352	25 —	440	3 —	528	12 —	616	20 —
268	15 —	356	24 —	444	2 —	532	11 —	620	19 —
272	14 —	360	23 —	448	1 —	536	10 —	624	18 —
276	13 —	364	22 —	452	31 July	540	9 —	628	17 —
280	12 —	368	21 —	456	30 —	544	8 —	632	16 —
284	11 —	372	20 —	460	29 —	548	7 —	636	15 —
288	10 —	376	19 —	464	28 —	552	6 —	640	14 —
292	9 —	380	18 —	468	27 —	556	5 —	644	13 —
296	8 —	384	17 —	472	26 —	560	4 —	648	12 —
300	7 —	388	16 —	476	25 —	564	3 —	652	11 —
304	6 —	392	15 —	480	24 —	568	2 —		

[1] Reproduced from Nöldeke, *Ṭabari*, p. 436. This table is based on the postulate (*ibid.*, 407) that the Sasanian year was never intercalated, a hypothesis which disagrees with the evidence; see above, p. 787.

CHAPTER 21(*b*)

IRANIAN FESTIVALS

There is no direct contemporary evidence for the festivals celebrated by Iranians in the ill-documented Seleucid and Parthian periods; but much can be deduced from various sources, notably the national epic, and the Zoroastrian calendar and holy books. There can be no doubt that Zoroastrianism was the dominant religion in Iran in both these epochs, as it was in the succeeding Sasanian period, and that accordingly it was the Zoroastrian festivals which were those most widely kept in the land, even if Hellene and Babylonian, Jew and pagan held their own feast-days locally and among themselves.

Festivals are a characteristic part of Zoroastrianism, a faith which enjoins on man the pleasant duty of being happy, but there are no fast days in this religion,[1] according to whose tenets hunger belongs, with sorrow, to the Devil. All holy days were celebrated accordingly with feasting, music and merry-making, and many pretty or poetic customs attached to them. It was chiefly these which were recorded by non-Zoroastrians in post-Sasanian times, rather than the religious intention of the observances (although valuable information even in this regard is provided by some Muslim writers, in particular by Bīrūnī).[2]

Worship was an essential part of each festival. To offer it acceptably the worshipper had to be clean in body as well as devout in spirit, and there are many references to bathing in stream and cistern on holy days. The devout then gathered for communal worship, at which the services would be dedicated to the divinity whose feast it was; and, to judge from later practice, especial prayers were offered and rituals carried out also by individuals. Thus on the feast-day of Hordād, who presides over water, prayers and offerings would be made generally at streams and wells, and on that of Amurdād, protector of plants, at the foot of great trees. At high festivals assemblies and banquets followed the religious observances, and the king and nobles were expected on such occasions to provide public entertainment. Thus in a work of the Sasanian period it is told how in A.D. 518 the priests and people of an

[1] See Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, p. 230.

[2] For consistency proper names are given in this chapter in their Middle Persian (Sasanian) forms, even in reference to Parthian times or in quotations from Muslim authors.

Iranian locality awaited their governor in order to celebrate the feast of Fravardīgān, in expectation that he would attend worship (*jašt*), provide a banquet, and distribute gifts among them.[1]

For such communal occasions halls were built, which are often mentioned in the Iranian epic. Thus in the remote Kayanian period (whose celebration contains some matter relevant to Parthian times) Lohrasp is said to have built at Zoroastrian Balkh

A city with its streets, bazaars and quarters,
In each whereof there was a place to hold
The feast of Sada, round a Fane of Fire.[2]

Ardašīr Pāpakān gave in honour of his grandson Hormizd a banquet in the hall "wherein was held Nō Rōz and Sada-feast";[3] and when the people rejoiced at the remission of taxes by Bahrām Gōr

They all flocked to the Fire-fanes, to the halls
Where New Year's Day and Sada feast were kept.[4]

It was an act of piety to endow these feasts either in thanksgiving or to benefit the souls of the departed. When Hormizd IV defeated Bahrām Čōbīn, he distributed largesse to the poor and his own servitors,

And sent the Fanes of Fire another third,
There to be given over to the priests
To grace the feasts of New Year and of Sada.[5]

After the death of Khusrau Parvēz the widowed Shīrīn disposed of all her wealth, for his soul's sake, to kinsmen and the poor, and

. . . gave too somewhat to the Fanes of Fire,
The feasts of New Year's Day and Mihr and Sada.[6]

On the holy days themselves it was enjoined that all men of means should give alms with especial generosity to the poor.

The high festivals were times of holiday, when only essential work was done; and also times of peace and goodwill. In the epic it is said of Mihragān, the feast traditionally founded by King Frēdōn,

All men began to tread the path of God,
Abstaining from contention and observing
A feast inaugurated royally.
. . . .

[1] See G. Hoffmann, "Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer", *AKM* VII. 3 (1880), 79.
[2] Firdausī, *Shāhnāma*, tr. Warner, IV, 317; text VI, 1446.
[3] Warner VI, 273; text VII, 1979.
[4] Warner VII, 11; text VII, 2121.
[5] Warner VIII, 132–3; text VIII, 2623.
[6] Warner IX, 40; text IX, 2941 (with variant reading in which 'Mihr' is lacking).

.... That time of rest and festival
Began with him, and his memorial
Is still the month of Mihr. He banished then
All grief and labour from the minds of men.[1]

In Sasanian times at least, and probably earlier, great fairs were sometimes held on such feast-days; and one in particular is mentioned as taking place at Mihragān.[2]

It was meritorious to keep religious festivals in general, but there were only seven whose celebration was a binding religious duty. These were the six feasts known in Sasanian times as the *gāhāmbār*s, which according to tradition were founded by Zoroaster himself,[3] and the festival called Nō Rōz, "New Day", which ushered in the new year. This too must have been consecrated to his religion by the prophet, for it completed a series of seven feasts which were linked with his fundamental teachings concerning the seven great Amešaspands and the seven creations.[4] These feasts formed the framework of the Zoroastrian devotional year, and helped to imprint the doctrines of the faith on the minds of its adherents, doctrines which are hardly touched on in Muslim writings concerning Zoroastrian festivals. Converts to Islam were naturally required to abandon the observance of the gāhāmbārs, and of the seven obligatory feasts only the spring Nō Rōz is still celebrated in Muslim Iran, this festival having (because of calendar changes) become partly secularised already before the coming of Islam.[5]

In origin the gāhāmbārs appear to have been old pagan festivals of the pastoral year,[6] which were refounded by Zoroaster as holy days of his own faith. (He himself, according to tradition, received his revelation at the spring gāhāmbār.)[7] The association of these festivals with the seasons is preserved by their names and by certain fixed Avestan epithets.[8] The series is as follows.

[1] Warner I, 175; text I, 62–3.

[2] See, e.g., Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 222 (Mihragān), 228, 230.

[3] See Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 219.

[4] It used to be thought that this link was a secondary development, perhaps made as late as the Sasanian period itself, but the researches of various scholars have shown that this was not so. For references and a more detailed treatment see Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* I, 173–5, 223–4.

[5] See further below.

[6] See R. Roth, "Der Kalender des Avesta", 698–720.

[7] See B. T. Anklesaria (ed.), *Vichitakiha-i Zatsparam* (Bombay, 1964), xxxi, pp. 1ff.

[8] See *Visperad* I. 2, II. 2, tr. L. H. Mills in *The Zend-Avesta* III (Oxford, 1887), pp. 335, 338 (SBE XXXI).

1. *Maidhyōi-zarəmaya*, "Mid-greenness", i.e. "Mid-spring", celebrated 40 days after the beginning of the year, or on the tenth day of the second month. For the creation of the sky, protected by the Amešaspand Shahrevar.

2. *Maidhyōi-šəma*, "Mid-summer", 60 days after Maidhyōi-zarəmaya, or on the tenth day of the fourth month. Identified with the summer solstice. For the creation of water, protected by the Amešaspand Hordād.

3. *Paitišahya*, "(feast of) bringing in the corn", 75 days after Maidhyōi.-šəma, or on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month. For the creation of earth, protected by the Amešaspand Spendārmad.

4. *Ayāthrima*, "(feast of) the home-coming", i.e. of the herds from pasture. 30 days after Paitišahya, or on the twenty-fifth day of the seventh month. Regarded as marking the end of summer. For the creation of plants, protected by the Amešaspand Amurdād.

5. *Maidhyāirya*, "Mid-year" i.e. "Mid-winter", 80 days after Ayāthrima, or on the fifteenth day of the tenth month. Identified with the winter solstice. For the creation of cattle, protected by the Amešaspand Vahman.

6. *Hamaspathmaēdaya*, of uncertain meaning, 75 days after Maidhyāirya, or on the thirtieth day of the twelfth month, marking the end of the year. The night hours, from sunset till the next dawn, were consecrated to the souls of the dead (*fravašis*). For the creation of man, protected by Ohrmazd himself.

In the beginning all these high festivals lasted evidently for a day, and this must have remained the state of affairs throughout Parthian times. Corporate worship was especially enjoined for them; and it was probably under the Sasanians that an extended service was evolved particularly for their celebration, known as *Vīspe Ratavō*, or the *jašt ī Visperad* "service of All the Masters".[1] This is dedicated to Ohrmazd, the "high Master", and under him to all the *yazad*s of the good creation. It was performed during Hāvan Gāh (that is, between sunrise and noon) on the gāhāmbār days, and within living memory it was customary for all the priests of a locality to gather together for its celebration at their chief place of worship, where many of the laity too would attend.[2] This solemn rite was especially an occasion for offering animal sacrifice, the fat being made an oblation to fire.[3] The flesh helped to provide food for the gāhāmbār feasts, together with the bread and fruits which had likewise been blessed during the service; and grace came, it was thought, to those who partook of this *myazd*,

[1] On this service see Darmesteter, *Le Zend Avesta* I, lxvii.

[2] See Khudayar Dastur Sheriyar, *Sir J. J. Madressa Jubilee Volume* (Bombay, 1914), 302–5; Boyce, "The pious foundations of the Zoroastrians", *BSOAS* xxx (1968), 277.

[3] See Boyce, "*Ātaš-zōhr* and *Āb-zōhr*", *JRAS* 1966, 101–3, with references.

as the consecrated offerings were termed. All were adjured, as a religious duty, to contribute something, however small. If a man were too poor to have anything at all to give, still he should attend and share with his fellows both worship and rejoicing; and if the gāhāmbār feast in his neighbourhood were held at the house of an enemy, still he must go, for these seasons were above all the time for reconciliation and the furthering of brotherly love, as well as piety.[1] In a Zoroastrian *Rivāyat* it is told how Khosrau Anōširvān celebrated magnificently the gāhāmbār of Hamaspathmaēdaya, inviting all his subjects, high and low, to his feast; but he learnt in a dream that, despite his lavishness, even greater merit had accrued to a poor man who, unable to attend the king's gāhāmbār, had sold a leaf of his wooden double door, and so "celebrated the gāhāmbār as best he could",[2] depriving himself in order to worship God. However it may have been in the remote past, latterly only this last gāhāmbār of Hamaspathmaēdaya has had its special lay observances. For this festival, when creation is complete, women in some Zoroastrian communities bake bread and flat cakes in the shape of little men, animals, stars and other objects; and men and children mould figures of clay and daub them white, and set them on the roofs of houses to be seen by the fravašis, who themselves aided Ohrmazd to achieve the great work of creation.[3]

Theological teachings concerning the fravašis are complex; but, in popular belief, no distinction is made between fravaši and *ruvān*, the soul of a dead person; and it is held that at Hamaspathmaēdaya "all the fravašis come down on this earth and they all go back to their own [former] abodes ... When the gāhāmbār is celebrated, the accursed Ahriman is stupified and the souls of the wicked are liberated from hell and go back again to their own abodes. The souls of the pious are delighted and make merry ... the souls of the wicked sit in fear ... like a person who comes out of the imperial jail and is in dread, every hour, lest he should be carried back to his own place ... Hence it is necessary for men that [during] these ... days they should put fragrant perfumes on fire and should praise the souls, and perform myazd and *āfrīnagān* and recite the Avesta so that those souls may be in comfort, joy and delight. And ... during those ... days they should not engage them-

[1] See Unvala, *Dārāb Hormazyar's Rivāyat*, I, 306. 11–12, 436–9; tr. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats*, 290 (end), 325; *Saddar Bundahesh*, ed. Dhabhar (Bombay, 1909), Ch. L. 21–2, tr. Dhabhar, *Rivayats*, 541. The final detail is from living observance, see Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, Ch. 2.

[2] See Unvala, *op. cit.*, 436–9; Dhabhar, *Rivayats*, 325.

[3] See Boyce, *loc. cit.*

selves in any other thing except in doing duties and good works, so that the souls may go back to their places with delight and pronounce benediction."[1] "During this time people put food in the halls of the dead and drink on the roofs of the houses, believing that the spirits of their dead ... come out from the places of their reward or their punishment, that they go to the dishes laid out for them, imbibe their strength and suck their taste. They fumigate their houses with juniper, that the dead may enjoy its smell. The spirits of the pious men dwell among their families, children and relations, and occupy themselves with their affairs, although invisible to them."[2] These beliefs and customs are indicated already in the ancient Avestan hymn to the fravašis, and undoubtedly existed in Iran throughout the Parthian and Sasanian periods, age-old pagan elements persisting in the more spiritual Zoroastrian festival (as in the Christian feast of All Souls). In spite therefore of the sense of happiness and family piety which informs the festival, there is also a faint touch of ancient dread; and in Sasanian rituals Mihr, the great warrior and protector, was especially invoked before the fravašis in its night-office.[3] The elevated Zoroastrian doctrine of this holy feast is that on it created man remembers and honours those just men who have lived on earth before him, and thinks, as Zoroaster insisted that he should, on judgment, heaven and hell. In its present observance in orthodox Iranian villages, as the first faint light of the following dawn appears a fire is lit upon every roof, and the chant of Avesta goes up from the house-tops in farewell to the fravašis. (In this there is perhaps also an ancient, forgotten element of exorcism.) So the spirits of the dead withdraw as the old year fades, and the roof-fires burn themselves out as the sun rises for Nō Rōz, the "new day" of the new year.[4]

Nō Rōz is the most joyous and beautiful of the Zoroastrian feasts, a spring festival invested with especial religious significance. Religiously it celebrates the creation of fire, which informs all the other six creations, being as it were their spirit or life-force; and so it belongs to the Amešaspand Ardvahišt, protector of fire, and this completes the correspondence between the seven obligatory feasts, the seven creations,

[1] *Saddar Bundahesh* lii, p. 125, tr. pp. 542–3.
[2] Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 224.
[3] See *Nīrangistān*, ed. D. P. Sanjana (Bombay, 1894), fol. 53. v. 1f.; tr. S. J. Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān* (Bombay, 1915), 115 with n.3.
[4] On these observances see in more detail Boyce, *op. cit.*, Ch. 9. Parallels between Fravardīgān and festivals at the year's end among other peoples have often been drawn, see, e.g., J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism* (London, 1913), 262ff.

and the seven Amešaspands. One of Ardvahišt's helpers or *hamkārs* is Rapithwin, the spirit of noon, who personifies also summer with its warmth, which is the ideal season. Hence Rapithwin is also lord both of the ideal time which once was, before the assault by Ahriman, and of the future time of the resurrection, when that perfect state will be restored. All through the cold dark winter the noonday watch of the Zoroastrian day is called the "Second Havān", and is dedicated, like the "First Hāvan" to Mihr (Mithra); for then Rapithwin is held to be beneath the earth, protecting the roots of plants and springs of water from *daēvic* frost. But at noon of Nō Rōz he returns above ground to bring in the summer season, which lasts from then till noon of Ayāthrima, the fourth gāhāmbār. Each year his return foreshadows, with the springtime resurgence of life, the final resurrection and triumph of good. Every Zoroastrian had therefore the duty to welcome him on this day. The priests solemnized a *yasna* in his honour, and they and the laity said the noonday prayers to Rapithwin for the first time since Ayāthrima, five months earlier.[1]

Historically Nō Rōz was probably an ancient pan-Iranian spring festival, reconsecrated by Zoroaster; and it came to be associated with the legend of Jamšēd, who ruled the world in the golden age which will eventually be restored, and of which Nō Rōz is both a remembrance and a promise. The learned said that history began from that day, when the sun first moved.[2] The characteristic of the feast was that it was a time of renewal, of hope and joy, and it was sought to make everything then fresh and auspicious. New clothes were worn, and food was of the new season. "Among other things which it was thought propitious to begin this day with, was a mouthful of pure fresh milk and fresh cheese; all the kings of Persia took it as a blessing."[3] The kings also ate on Nō Rōz morning "white sugar with fresh Indian nuts pared".[4] Moreover, since Nō Rōz is the seventh of the seven feasts, there were many customs belonging to it which embodied the number seven, through the setting out, in sevens, of objects to represent the various creations. Thus, for example, seven sorts of grain were put on a silver table before the king, and the twigs of seven different kinds of trees. "Besides, they put on this table seven white earthen plates . . . [and] seven white dirhems of the year's coinage."[5] A more general

[1] See Boyce, "Rapithwin, Nō Rūz, and the feast of Sade", 201f.
[2] See 'Umar Khayyām (attrib.), *Nōrōz Nāma*, 4ff.
[3] Jāḥiz, *Kitāb al-maḥāsin*, p. 362; tr. p. 99. [4] *Ibid.* [5] Jāḥiz, 361; tr. 98.

custom (still observed in the Zoroastrian villages of Iran) was to sow before the festival seven kinds of seed in small containers, to come up fresh and green for the holy day. "For the King the sight of growing barley was particularly deemed a blessing . . . And the harvest [of these seeds] was never gathered but with songs and music and mirth."[1] Music sounded sweetly throughout Nō Rōz, and several Sasanian melodies were named for this day,[2] whose feasts were famous. The romance of *Vīs u Rāmīn*, attributed in origin to the Parthian period, begins with Nō Rōz at the court of the high king: "What a delightful feast it was in springtime! At this feast all the illustrious [were gathered] . . . among them circled the bowl full of wine . . . the smoke of burning musk gathered like a cloud . . . here musicians lamenting over the wine, there nightingales lamenting over the rose . . . Delightful though the king's feast was, other feasts were no less than his . . . All left their houses for the fields, bearing with them the means of diversion. From every garden, meadow and stream songs of all kinds saluted the ear . . . One group gaily riding on horseback, another listening to music, and dancing . . . another by the bank of a stream, another amid tulips. Having sought these places for delight, they changed to brocade the rough leather of the earth."[3]

Nō Rōz was a time for exchanging gifts in token of friendship, even if it was no more than a fruit or flower among the poor. From Achaemenian days presents were then made to the King of Kings by lesser rulers, nobles, the ladies of the court, merchants and humbler people, who "gave dinars and dirhams of the year's coinage put in a lemon, a quince or an apple".[4] "And a clerk stood there, inscribing [the name of] every donor as well as the reward of all those whom the King rewarded for their present",[5] for this giving of gifts was never one-sided. Nō Rōz was a time also for reconciliation. Thus in the *Shāh-nāma* it is recorded that when Bahrām Gōr was in disgrace:

[1] *Ibid.* 362–3; tr. 99–100; cf. Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, 217. The Irani Muslim custom of marking the day by setting out a table bearing seven objects whose names begin with the letter *s* is, however, unknown among Zoroastrians.

[2] See A. Christensen, *The Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume* (Bombay, 1918), 374, 375, with *Les types du premier homme et du premier roi dans l'histoire légendaire des Iraniens* II (Leiden, 1934), 153 n.3.

[3] Fakhr al-Din Gurgānī, *Vīs u Rāmīn*, ed. M. Minovi (Tehrān, 1935), 28–30; French tr. by H. Massé, *Le roman de Wīs et Rāmīn* (Paris, 1959), 25–6. English tr. by G. Morrison (New York, 1971), 20–1.

[4] Jāḥiz, 368, tr. 101. (A Nō Rōz present is still so given, for example, to the village school teacher by Irani Zoroastrians.)

[5] *Ibid.*; cf. Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 219.

That year he looked not on his father's face,
Save on Nō Rōz and at the Sada feast,
When he drew near among the other nobles.[1]

On this day of peace and joy the Sasanian kings, it is said, "abstained from discussing any matter, fearing lest something unpleasant should come of it and head the whole year".[2] This tradition seems at variance with another which says that at Nō Rōz the king gave public audience and allowed any man to complain against him of wrongs;[3] but probably this administration of open justice took place during the season of Nō Rōz, that is, in the days following the auspicious "new day" itself. In later times justice was especially done on the third day, which is dedicated to Ardvahišt, guardian of fire and the truth, and lord of the whole festival.[4]

Apart from the seven feasts of obligation, there were other festivals, some demonstrably ancient, which it was a merit, though not a duty, to keep. One which we have already met repeatedly in the epic is the *jašn ī Sada*, the "hundredth-day festival", kept a hundred days "from Rapithwin". At some unknown date two different days came to be celebrated (presumably in different localities) as Sada. One was on the hundredth day after the disappearance of Rapithwin, i.e. a hundred days after the gāhāmbār of Ayāthrima, or Rōz Ābān of Vahman Māh. The other Sada was celebrated a hundred days before the return of Rapithwin, i.e. before Nō Rōz, and was kept on Rōz Aštād of Māh Ādur.[5] In both cases Sada was a winter fire-festival, held to strengthen the sun and to help bring back warmth and light to the world. "People used to make great fires ... and were deeply engaged in the worship and praise of God; also they used to assemble for eating and merriment. They maintained that this was done for the purpose of banishing the cold and dryness that arises in winter-time, and that the spreading of the warmth would keep off the attacks of all that which is obnoxious to the plants in the world. In all this, their proceeding was that of a man who marches out to fight his enemy with a large army."[6] The enemy was Ahriman, fought through his lieutenant, the demon of winter, who won a partial victory annually over Rapithwin, driving him beneath

[1] *Shāhnāma*, Warner VI, 389; text VII, 2092.
[2] Jāḥiz, 362; tr. 98.
[3] See Niẓām al-Mulk, 57; tr. 42–3.
[4] See Boyce in *Pratidānam*, 211.
[5] See *ibid.*, 213–14.
[6] Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 221–2. Bīrūnī writes here of the Sada which belonged to the *wihēzag* year of the second Sasanian reform (see below). This was celebrated in Shahrēvar, 100 days before the religious "Greater" Nō Rōz on 6 Ādur.

the earth; and at Sada a huge fire was built near or over a water-course, to aid him symbolically in his subterranean task of protecting plants and springs from frost. Nowadays at least the fire is also near a shrine to Mithra, lord of the sun; and as it blazes up Avesta is recited, and a muster-roll is called of the names of the illustrious dead,[1] since Sada looks forward hopefully from the depth of winter to the return of spring, which symbolises the resurrection.

Although Sada's doctrinal significance is clear, this feast too was given epic associations, and was held to celebrate the discovery of fire by the Pēšdādian king Hōšang.[2] It seems probable that such associations between Zoroastrian feasts and the heroic past were established before the Sasanian period. Later (perhaps towards the end of that epoch) Sada came to be linked instead with the more popular Frēdōn-Dahāk legends;[3] and so (since Dahāk slew Jamšēd and was overcome by Frēdōn) it was drawn into the epic cycle which connected Nō Rōz with Mihragān.[4] (In post-Sasanian times even the gāhāmbārs came to be associated with this cycle, since Jamšēd was said to have been ordered by God to establish their observance.[5]) In the Sasanian period Sada was celebrated by king and commoner alike; great assemblies were held, and the king presided over those at court. Khosrau Parvēz, for example, after offering thanksgiving at the shrine of Ādur Gušnasp, departed "on the eighth day, for the feast of Sada was at hand".[6] The importance of this winter-feast is suggested by the prophecy attributed to Wozorgmihr, that with the coming of the Arabs "will cease the observation of the feast of Sada".[7]

Other ancient festivals were dedicated to individual yazads, the lesser divine beings who helped under Ohrmazd to further the good creation. Chief among these was Mihr (Mithra) whose festival was traditionally an autumn one, scarcely less well loved than the spring feast of Nō Rōz. Indeed it was said that "some people have given the preference to Mihragān by as much as they prefer autumn to spring".[8] The two feasts formed the two poles of the year, celebrated as they were at the

[1] See Boyce, *art. cit.*, 214–15, and in more detail in *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, Ch. 7.

[2] *Shāhnāma*, tr. Warner I, 124; text I, 19. Both epic associations are given in a post-Sasanian Zoroastrian work; see M. R. Unvala, "A few Parsee festivals (jashans) according to an old Parsee manuscript" in J. J. Modi (ed.), *Spiegel Memorial Volume* (Bombay, 1908) 209–10.

[3] See Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 227.

[4] Cf. Jāḥiẓ, 360; tr. 97.

[5] *Sad-dar* (metrical version) xciv, tr. Christensen in *Les types du premier homme et du premier roi* II, 64–5.

[6] *Shāhnāma*, tr. VIII, 313; text IX, 2797.

[7] *Ibid.*, tr. VIII, 67–8; text VIII, 2564,

[8] Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 223.

spring and autumn equinoxes; and theologically too they were linked, for by autumn the sun has done its work of ripening the fruits and harvest, "so they consider Mihragān as a sign of resurrection and the end of the world, because at Mihragān that which grows reaches its perfection".[1] The festival was also a time for rallying the forces of good to oppose the demons of coming winter and darkness. Mihr is one of the great fighting divinities of Zoroastrianism, a champion for the kingdom of righteousness; and on this day "in the houses of the kings . . . at the time of dawn a valiant warrior was posted in the court of the palace, who called out at the highest pitch of his voice: 'O ye angels, come down to the world, strike the *dēvs* and evil-doers and expel them from the world.'"[2]

The epic legends attached to Mihragān are fittingly heroic. It was said that on this day with Mihr's help King Frēdōn overcame the monster Až Dahāk, crushing him with an ox-headed mace, which is the characteristic weapon of the yazad.[3] Such a mace is carried by every Zoroastrian priest at his initiation, as a symbol of the moral fight which he is taking up against evil; and Mihragān is celebrated both in memory of an epic victory and as a reminder of spiritual combats. It was further held that the great compact between Ohrmazd and Ahriman, which fixes the period of their struggle, was made at Mihragān, since Mihr is the lord of all covenants.[4] The warlike associations of the feast caused the rituals of Mihragān to be celebrated chiefly by men,[5] and this links the festival with the male cults of Roman Mithraism. In its general observance Mihragān was, however, a beloved feast for the whole Iranian community. Like the gāhāmbārs, it was particularly an occasion for offering animal-sacrifice, for public worship and for great feasts and merry-making, with autumn foods (ripe fruits and nuts) replacing now the new milk and cheeses of Nō Rōz.[6] As at the spring feast gifts were exchanged, at least among the great. Thus a story told of Khosrau Parvēz begins when "he gave audience on . . . Mihragān,

[1] *Loc. cit.*

[2] *Ibid.*, 222. "Angels" is evidently an Islamic substitution for the name of the *yazad* Mihr and his divine helpers.

[3] *Shāhnāma*, tr. I, 175; text I, 62–3; Tha'ālibī, 36–7; Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 222; Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārsnāma*, ed. G. Le Strange and R. A. Nicholson (London, 1921), p. 36 (GMS, n.s. I).

[4] Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 222.

[5] See Boyce, "*Ātaš-zōhr* and *Āb-zōhr*", *JRAS* 1966, 107 with n.3; "On Mithra's part in Zoroastrianism", *BSOAS* XXXII (1969), 26 n. 82.

[6] For the later observance of Mihragān see A. V. W. Jackson, *Persia past and present* (London, 1909), 371–2; Boyce, "Mihragān among the Irani Zoroastrians" in J. R. Hinnells (ed.), *Mithraic Studies* I (Manchester, 1975), 106–18.

to receive the customary gifts, and people brought him a countless number".[1] At this feast the Sasanian kings are said to have assumed a rayed crown in honour of Mihr as lord of the sun;[2] and, as at Nō Rōz, they gave special audiences then to the common people.[3]

Another undoubtedly ancient feast is Tīragān, which fell in high summer. In popular usage this feast is named the *jašn-i Tīr u Teštar*, Teštar being the Avestan Tištrya, yazad of the star Sirius; for Tištrya had become identified, probably in Achaemenian times, with Tīri, who, unknown to the Avesta, was evidently in origin the Mesopotamian Nabū, whose worship had been adopted by the Medes and Persians.[4] The character of Tīragān seems to have been dictated, however, by the cult of Tištrya, who was a yazad of rain, for it was primarily a rain-festival; and one of its pretty customs was that women and children tied on their wrists seven-stranded bracelets of different coloured silks, representing the rainbow. At the end of the feast they would go to some high place and toss these into the air for the wind to carry away.[5] At Tīragān it was the custom for people to "play in the water, and make fun, and try to dip each other on this day the whole day long";[6] and the festival is still thus happily celebrated in Zoroastrian villages of Iran. It was presumably the importance of rain to the farmer that made and kept Tīragān a great feast. (It is one of the three Persian festivals mentioned in the Talmud, together with Nō Rōz and Mihragān.)[7] Bīrūnī records an epic association between it and the legendary archer Āriš, who made a fabled bowshot that defined the boundaries of Iran, his arrow flying 1000 farsakhs.[8] This association seems to arise from the Avestan myth which tells how the yazad flies annually, swift as an arrow, to beget rain for the world, descending in stallion-form upon the "mares" of the waters. (The Avestan word for arrow, *tighra*, came in late Sasanian times to be pronounced *tīr*, and so this provided incidentally another link with Tīri, also by then called Tīr.)

Tištrya and Tīri continue their association in the Zoroastrian calendar, in which a day and month are dedicated to Tīri, but the religious services celebrated on them are all devoted to Tištrya. The priests of Iran formerly divided the year into twelve months of 360 days,

[1] Tha'ālibī, 471.
[2] Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 222.
[3] Niẓām al-Mulk, *loc. cit.* (p. 800, above).
[4] See W. Eilers, "Semiramis", *SWAW* 274 (1971), no. 2, pp. 43–5.
[5] See Sorushian, 51; Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, Ch. 8. Another custom was of a *nīrang* (sacred formula) being tied to the wrist, and cast into water at the end of the festival, see Dhabhar, *Rivayats*, 343.
[6] Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 221.
[7] See Taqizadeh, "Iranian festivals", 637–8.
[8] *Ibid.*, 220.

according to a calendar observed since Indo-Iranian times. Giving the names of divinities not only to months but also to days was probably an innovation of the later Achaemenian period, carried out under inspiration of devotional usage from Egypt. In Yasna xvi. 3–6 the yazads are invoked in the order in which they give their names to the thirty days of the Zoroastrian month. The twelve greatest of them presided also over the twelve months, and when day- and month-name coincided, this was the high festival of the yazad. Some of these name-day festivals were old ones. Thus Mihragān was celebrated on day Mihr of month Mihr (the sixteenth of the seventh month), Tīragān on day Tīr of month Tīr (the thirteenth of the fourth month). No fewer than four of the thirty days were devoted to Ohrmazd (the first, named Ohrmazd, and the eighth, fifteenth and twenty-third, named "Creator", Daθuš/Dadv/Dai); and all four were kept as feast days in the Creator's month, Dai.[1] This was the tenth month of the calendar year, the equivalent of November–December of the Gregorian calendar; and this month of deep winter was presumably named for the supreme God so that he should be especially invoked during it, when his mighty beneficent power was most needed against the powers of evil, then physically in the ascendant.

The other deities who have name-day feasts are the six Amešaspands, the fravašis, Fire (Ādur) and Water (Ābān). There was some similarity in observances between certain of these feasts. Thus on the festivals of both Ardvahišt and Ādur there were especial gatherings at the fire-temples. Water was honoured both on the feast-day of the Amešaspand Hordād, and on that of Ābān.[2] In Parthian and Sasanian times there were temples dedicated to individual yazads (apart from the great fire-temples, each consecrated to Vahrām, yazad of Victory and lord of the twentieth day); and name-day festivals must have been celebrated with especial pomp at such shrines. Thus the eighth (Ābān) of the tenth month (Ābān) would certainly have been a feast-day at the temples of Ardvīsūr Anāhīd, yazad of waters. Among the great shrines established in Armenia under Arsacid influence were ones dedicated to Ohrmazd (Aramazd), Anāhīd, Mihr and Tīr (Tiur); and some of the chief Iranian festivals were celebrated in that country until the 5th century A.D., when they were transformed into Christian feasts.[3] Thus a festival

[1] *Ibid.*, 226, 235.

[2] Since in Sasanian times the Greater Nō Rōz was celebrated on Rōz Hordād, some observances honouring water are recorded at that festival, see Jāḥiẓ, 99; tr. 362; Taqizadeh, *op. cit.* 636 with n.2.

[3] See Taqizadeh, *op. cit.*, 639–49 (with further references).

of Anāhīd appears to have been refounded as the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary; and the Greater Mihragān (21 Mihr) was reconsecrated to St George the Soldier. (The fact that it was the twenty-first and not the sixteenth of Mihr shows Sasanian influence on the Armenian calendar of feasts.)

In Parthian times, with all festivals still lasting (as holy observances) for a single day only, there were accordingly twenty-three great feasts in the year (the seven days of obligation, Sada, and fifteen name-day feasts), as well doubtless as many minor and local celebrations. The Arsacids themselves were demonstrably good Zoroastrians, and in some details of doctrine apparently more orthodox than their successors, the Sasanians.[1] Nevertheless, the facts point to a curious development during their period of rule, whereby Nō Rōz came to be celebrated at the autumn equinox, and Mihragān at the spring one, the two poles of the religious year thus changing places. It is difficult to find a satisfactory explanation of this fundamental change in the devotional pattern.[2]

The Sasanians inherited this calendar when Ardašīr Pāpakān overthrew the Arsacids. He did not attempt, it seems, to move Nō Rōz from September; but it appears to have been he who introduced an even more radical calendar reform. This – made, evidently, in the interests of more accurate time-reckoning rather than on religious grounds – consisted of the creation of a 365-day calendar on the Egyptian model, through the addition at the end of the year of five extra days named after the five *Gāthās* of Zoroaster.[3] This measure, however scientifically planned, created profound confusion, and its unforeseen effects still trouble the Zoroastrian community today. The confusion arose because the bulk of the population – necessarily, in those days, illiterate – clearly failed to comprehend either the purpose or the mechanism of the change; and so in the first year they evidently ignored as far as they could the new and, as they termed them, "stolen" days (stolen, that is, from somewhere in their own familiar year), and passed directly in their private computations from 30 Spendārmad to 1 Fravardīn, as tradition taught them. The king's authority nevertheless evidently ensured that Nō Rōz was celebrated officially on the new date which he had ordained, even though it had already been kept privately by most of his subjects five days earlier; and so matters continued throughout the first year of the reform, with a five-day

[1] The case for this is argued in detail by the present writer in *Zoroastrians: their religious beliefs and practices*, chapter 6.
[2] For a further consideration of this problem, see *ibid.*, Ch. 7.
[3] On this reform see in more detail Boyce, "Calendar", 513ff.

discrepancy between the popular and the official observances of every feast, until by the old reckoning 30 Spendārmad was reached again. But now, because the people had disregarded the "Gāthā" days at their introduction, this corresponded with 25 Spendārmad by the new style, and so this time they had to wait not five but ten days before they were officially allowed to celebrate Nō Rōz.[1] This meant, in religious terms, that it was ten days before the fravašis, duly welcomed back to their old homes on the night of 30 Spendārmad, could officially be bidden farewell at the dawn of the new year. This extension of the "stolen days" happened only once, for after that bewildering first year the people evidently accepted the reformed calendar as a fact, perplexing, unwelcome but inevitable; even so the five new "Gāthā" days now had to pass each year between the return of the fravašis on 30 Spendārmad and their departure on 1 Fravardīn. These days were accordingly devoted to them, as the *Rōzān Fravardīgān* ("the days of the fravašis"), and became one long festival in their honour, absorbing the old Hamaspathmaēdaya. Many people were evidently troubled, however, by memories of that first year, when the fravašis had had to linger on earth for ten days. As Bīrūnī records, they were anxious "to establish the matter on a firm basis, as this is one of the chief institutes of their religion and . . . they wished to be careful, since they were unable to establish the real facts of the case".[2] Rather, therefore, than risk failing in any way in their duty to the dead, they kept thereafter a ten-day festival for them, an unofficial "lesser" one during the last five days of Spendārmad, and a "greater" one, officially approved, during the five "Gāthā" days. This is how the festival is celebrated still today.[3] The observance conflicted, however, with what must have been the ancient description of the feast of All Souls in the Avestan hymn to the fravašis, and accordingly a word in this must have been changed, so that the verse (Yt. 13. 49) came to say: ". . . the fravašis . . . who hasten to [their] homes at the time of Hamaspathmaēdaya, then they wander here for *ten* nights" (instead of, presumably, "the whole night"); and this is how it was recited thereafter.

As for the other high feasts, the first year of the reform evidently led the people to think that it was now needful, in order not to risk neglect in their duty to the divine beings, to keep all holy days twice, once on the traditional date by the new calendar, and again five days

[1] These developments are set out in Table 2, below. [2] *Op. cit.*, 224.
[3] See Modi, *Religious ceremonies*, 437–51; Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold*, ch. 9.

later, on what they confusedly held to be the *old* traditional date, that is, the correct time for the observance. Accordingly there came to be a general duplication of festivals, with, for instance, two Nō Rōz, two Mihragāns, and each of the six gāhāmbārs repeated, all at five-day intervals. In each case it was the second, putatively "old" observance which was considered to be the greater day, the earlier, official one being termed the lesser feast. According to tradition it was Ardašīr's grandson, Hormizd I (A.D. 272–3), who partially resolved the problem (presumably on the advice of his high priest, Kirdēr). Bīrūnī relates, with regard to Mihragān: "They celebrated both days as feast-days, until Hormuz b. Shapur, the Hero, connected the two days with each other, and raised to feast-days all the days between them, as he had done with the two Nō Rōz."[1] Once these new six-day observances had been established, explanations for the conjoined feasts were evolved. Thus it was said that the "Lesser" Nō Rōz (on 1 Fravardīn) commemorated the day on which Jamšēd was carried through the air by dēvs from Mount Damāvand to Babylon, whereas the "Greater" Nō Rōz (on 6 Fravardīn) celebrated his return, when he addressed all mankind in noble exhortation. The "Lesser" Mihragān (on 16 Mihr) commemorated "the joy of all mankind when they heard of Frēdōn's coming forward",[2] whereas it was on the "Greater" Mihragān (on 21 Mihr) that Frēdōn actually defeated and fettered Dahāk. As for the gāhāmbārs, the explanation in their case was that each of the first gāhāmbār days commemorated one of Ohrmazd's six acts of creation, and that after each He paused for five days,[3] so that men too ought to celebrate one day and rest and rejoice for the five that followed, the last day being particularly holy. (No explanation for the latter fact seems to have been given in the case of the gāhāmbārs.)

In the first Sasanian reigns, accordingly, the days of obligation were increased from seven to forty-six (with the six gāhāmbārs and Nō Rōz each extended to six days, and four extra days for the "Lesser" Fravardīgān); and the single days of all the other major feasts also grew to be six – a pleasant development for devout and casual believers alike. As far as can be judged from later usage, both worship and merry-making were extended simply by repetition; and still today in the oldest Zoroastrian villages of Iran there are endowed religious services and feasts which fill all the days of each gāhāmbār. That the

[1] *Op. cit.*, 222. [2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Greater Bundahišn* 1a. 16, ed. T. D. Anklesaria, 22. 10, tr. B. T. Anklesaria, 31.

enlarged festivals were kept officially in Sasanian times is shown by a contemporary document which relates how in A.D. 565 a Byzantine ambassador to Persia had to wait ten days at the frontier while the festival of Fravardīgān (popularly pronounced Frōrdīgān) was celebrated.[1] The gāhāmbār feasts were, however, shortened again by one day later in the Sasanian period. This development probably came about through the sixth gāhāmbār being identified solely with the five "Gāthā" days (losing, that is, 30 Spendārmad). Hamaspathmaēdaya was the greatest of the gāhāmbārs, since it completed and crowned the series, and so the other five were evidently adapted to conform to it, each, analogically, losing its first day. The other major festivals continued, however, to be six-day festivals till some time after the 10th century A.D. (when they too were reduced to five, the sixth day of each being then abandoned).

The establishment of the five-day gāhāmbārs probably belongs to the second Sasanian calendar reform, which can be dated with fair certainty to between A.D. 507 and 511. This reform was evidently made in an effort to deal with some of the difficulties created by the first one. The old 360-day calendar, being markedly shorter than the natural year, had been kept in harmony with it by the fairly frequent intercalation of a thirteenth month (in theory at least once every six years); but whereas the new 365-day calendar also receded against the sun-year, it did this so slowly that it now took 120 years, or three generations, to accumulate a month out of the unreckoned quarter-days. Intercalation of a single day every four years was an unfamiliar measure which the Zoroastrians could not bring themselves to accept, and intercalation of any kind ceased therefore to be practised. The new calendar accordingly slipped back steadily, too slowly to trouble anyone much during his own lifetime, but remorselessly enough to dislocate eventually the devotional year, so that by the end of the 5th century Nō Rōz and Mihragān were being celebrated two months before the autumn and spring equinoxes. A great conference of the learned, gathered from throughout the Zoroastrian community, was held therefore to decide what could be done to remedy this state of affairs, and to restore the holy year to its proper relationship with the seasons.[2] One measure which must have been debated was simply to bring 1 Fravardīn back

[1] See E. Doblhofer (transl.), *Byzantinische Diplomaten und östliche Barbaren, aus den Excerpta de legationibus des Konstantinos Porphyrogennetos ausgewählte Abschnitte des Priskos und Menander Protektor* (Graz, 1955), 122.

[2] See Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 44.

somehow to the spring equinox – that is, from July to March; but the greatest problem in making changes in the Zoroastrian calendar is that these affect not only the great communal feasts, but also all the many private observances carried out in every family on behalf of their own dead. The regular intercalation of a month, as in Parthian times, would not have dislocated these; but either to drag Fravardīn back suddenly by four months, or to hasten it on by seven, would have caused the utmost confusion and distress. In the end, therefore, the bold decision was taken to create a "leaping" (*wihēzag*) or "calculated" (*ōšmurdīg*) year for the seven feasts of obligation, so that these could be shifted forward by thirty days every 120 years, which would ensure that they were never more than a month away from the natural season which supported their doctrinal significance. The rest of the feasts would remain in their fixed places, and so would continue to recede slowly against the natural year, unchecked. This measure shows the enormous importance attached by Zoroastrians to the feasts founded by their prophet, and the strength of their desire to observe them properly. The way in which the decision was implemented was evidently to wait for a year in which the spring equinox next coincided with the first day of a calendar month, which happened to be Ādur, the ninth month; and then to transfer Nō Rōz from 1 Fravardīn (then in July) to 1 Ādur (in March), with all the six gāhāmbārs moving accordingly.[1] Plainly, it was intended to let Nō Rōz remain at 1 Ādur for 120 years, and then to move it forward to 1 Dai (the tenth month), which would then have come in its turn to coincide with the spring equinox; but 120 years later saw the end of the last great Sasanian reign, that of Khosrau Parvēz, and the realm was too troubled thereafter for this adjustment ever to be made. Nō Rōz continued to be celebrated, therefore, on 1 Ādur until about A.D. 1006, when by steady recession 1 Fravardīn had come to coincide once more with the spring equinox, and Nō Rōz was transferred to it again, to remain there ever after. The ingenious device of a "leaping" year for the obligatory feasts was thus put into practice once only, at the sixth-century reform; and thereafter, though the theory was evidently well known to scholar-priests, it remained a theory only, the secular power having been destroyed which could have enforced its regular enactment.

[1] Tables showing the movement of the gāhāmbārs are given by H. S. Nyberg, *Texte zum mazdayasnischen Kalender* (Uppsala, 1934), 83; H. Lewy, "Le calendrier perse", *Orientalia* x (1941), 33; Boyce, "Calendar", 531.

To restore the Nō Rōz of the wihēzag year to the traditional date of 1 Fravardīn must have been all the easier because Zoroastrian tenacity had ensured that 1 Fravardīn never ceased to be a feast day, although its observances had evidently become largely secularized. The day was still known, moreover, as Nō Rōz, and the regnal years of kings were reckoned from it as of old, and not from the religious Nō Rōz of Ādur Māh, which (although generally and piously observed) was distinguished as the "Nō Rōz of the priests", *Nō Rōz ī mōyān*. It was this fact, evidently, that the old Nō Rōz of 1 Fravardīn was a secular feast at the time of the Arab conquest, and remained so for several centuries thereafter, which made it possible for Muslim Iran to retain this one festival out of all the many which studded the Zoroastrian year.

Although the "leaping" year seems to have been devised for the seven obligatory feasts only, two others were incidentally affected. One was Sada, which is calculated from Nō Rōz; so after the creation of the wihēzag year this feast was celebrated twice, once on the hundredth day before the religious Nō Rōz of Ādur Māh,[1] and once on the hundredth day before the secular one of Fravardīn Māh. The other was the annual observance of the day of the prophet's death, which fell during the spring gāhāmbār, and so moved with it, being celebrated for a time both at its former date in the fixed calendar and at its new one in the "leaping" year.[2]

These changes and duplications meant that the devotional year became elaborated for a second time; and whereas after the first Sasanian reform the distinction was made between "greater" and "lesser" feasts, now an additional one had to be drawn between those of the wihēzag year and those of the ordinary, slowly receding calendar. This second distinction has led a number of scholars to suppose that the Sasanians actually used two separate calendars, one religious and one secular, but this theory can be disproved by a study of Bīrūnī's description of the festivals kept by Zoroastrians in the 10th century A.D., which shows that those of the wihēzag and of the ordinary calendar belonged in fact together, both sets being (in different degrees) religious, and making up a devotional year which was observed by the whole community. Apart from the complexity of the calendar after the two Sasanian reforms, there is, however, another factor confusing to the modern inquirer. This is the Zoroastrian respect for tradition, which brings it about that, if new practices are adopted, it is customary

[1] Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 221–2.

[2] See Boyce, *op. cit.*, 530–1.

in due course to ascribe them with all other existing institutions to the earliest periods of the faith. Thus in the Pahlavi books it is declared that Zoroaster himself not only established the 365-day calendar but also ordained the intercalation in it of a month every 120 years, the implication being that such intercalation had actually been carried out regularly from time immemorial. In the light both of known facts and of historical probability such pious claims deserve no credence.[1] They have the same degree of authenticity as the statement which represents Ohrmazd himself as revealing to Zoroaster that the fravašis return to earth annually during "the ten days of Fravardīgān . . . which precede Ādur Māh",[2] circumstances which first came into existence through the Sasanian calendar reforms being thus ascribed to the beginnings of human history.

Such claims are not, however, surprising when one considers the lack of historical consciousness among Zoroastrian theologians. Moreover, 1 Ādur was kept as the religious Nō Rōz for half a millennium, a stretch of time ample enough to establish the antiquity of any observance. It was long enough also to give Ādur Māh a lasting association with the fravašis, and down to the 20th century the Parsis continued to celebrate Rōz Fravardīn of Ādur Māh with the same rites in honour of the departed as they performed on Rōz Fravardīn of Fravardīn Māh.[3] By that time the month Fravardīn had slipped back to correspond to August/September in the Gregorian calendar; and the Irani Zoroastrians were once more keeping Nō Rōz twice, this time as a religious feast on 1 Fravardīn in August, and as a secular feast, in common with the rest of Iran, at the spring equinox (whose date, by their calendar, changed necessarily every four years).[4] This duplication of observances in modern times helps the understanding of the earlier duplication in the Sasanian period.

The calendars and therefore the festivals of other Zoroastrian peoples at that epoch were affected by the first Persian calendar reforms; but though the Sogdians and Khwārazmians accepted the introduction of the five extra days (while naming them differently), they too showed their loyalty to the old 360-day calendar by keeping their Nō Rōz

[1] On the question of historical probability see the penetrating article by Bickerman, "The 'Zoroastrian' calendar", 197–207.

[2] See *The Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī dīnīg* I. 1–2, ed. B. N. Dhabhar (Bombay, 1913), 1; tr. Nyberg, *Texte*, 45.

[3] See Karaka, *History of the Parsis* I, 151.

[4] See in detail Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, Chs. 7, 9.

thereafter on a day which corresponded with 6 Fravardīn and not the 1st – that is, with the "Greater" Nō Rōz.[1] There is not enough information to trace the history of their festivals, but for both peoples the feast of the fravašis came to be celebrated during the epagomenae, as in Persia itself; but Nō Rōz and the gāhāmbārs appear to have remained one-day festivals.[2] As well as the Armenians, a number of other non-Iranian peoples, neighbours or subjects of the Persians, knew and to some extent celebrated certain of the chief Zoroastrian feasts.[3]

The festivals discussed here were the great holy days of Parthian and Sasanian Iran; but it is evident that in those epochs the Zoroastrians celebrated also many minor and local feasts and fair-days, such as those of which Bīrūnī wrote that "we cannot fix them, as little as we can the watercourses of a torrent, it being impossible to count them";[4] for Iran was a devout and merry land during the days of the old religion.

[1] See Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 46, 233.
[2] On the 6 feasts of the Khwarazmian calendar (Bīrūnī, *op. cit.*, 225) see Roth, "Der Kalender des Avesta", 716ff.
[3] See Taqizadeh, "An ancient Persian practice", 603–20; "The Iranian festivals", 632–53.
[4] *Op. cit.*, 230.

TABLE 1. *The Old Persian calendar in 522/1* B.C.[1]

	Month-names[2]		
1. Adukanaiša	March/April	7. Bāgayādiš	Sept./Oct.
2. θūravāhara	April/May	8. *Varkazana[3]	Oct./Nov.
3. θāigarčiš	May/June	9. Āssiyādiya	Nov./Dec.
4. Garmapada	June/July	10. Anāmaka	Dec./Jan.
5.		11.	Jan./Feb.
6.		12. Viyaxna	Feb./March

[1] See Arno Poebel, *AJSLL* LV, 130–41, 285–314; LVI, 121–45; W. Hinz, "Behistun – Inschrift des Dareios", *ZDMG* XCVI, 326–31; R. G. Kent, *Old Persian* (New Haven, Conn., 1950; 2nd ed., 1953), "Historical appendix", pp. 158–63. For discussion of the meanings of the names see the references given under each in the lexicon to W. Brandenstein and M. Mayrhofer, *Handbuch des Altpersischen* (Wiesbaden, 1964).
[2] The days were given numbers, not names.
[3] Reconstructed from the derived Elamite form *Mar-ka-ča-na°*.

TABLE 2. *The Sasanian festivals at the introduction of the epagomenae in the 3rd century*

[Those festivals marked by an asterisk were evidently kept only in popular observance. The dates set opposite them for the reformed calendar are therefore in square brackets. The dates of the 2nd–5th gahāmbārs are omitted here.]

Year of the reform	Festival	Date in the reformed calendar	Date in popular observance
End of year 1	6th gahāmbār	30th Spendārmad	30th Spendārmad
	Fravardīgān	5 Gāthā days	1st–5th Fravardīn
	Farewell to the fravašis	5th Gāthā day	5th Fravardīn
Year 2	Nō Rōz	1st Fravardīn	6th Fravardīn
	....	....	....
	1st gāhāmbār	10th Ābān	15th Ābān
	....	....	....
	Mihragān	16th Mihr	21st Mihr
	....	....	....
	6th gahāmbār	[25th Spendārmad] 30th Spendārmad	30th Spendārmad
	*Lesser Fravardīgān	[26th–30th Spendārmad]	1st 5 Gāthā days
	Greater Fravardīgān	5 Gāthā days	2nd 5 Gāthā days
	Farewell to the fravašis	5th Gāthā day	10th Gāthā day
Year 3	Lesser Nō Rōz	1st Fravardīn	1st Fravardīn
	....	....	....
	*2nd farewell to the fravašis	[5th Fravardīn]	5th Fravardīn
	*Greater Nō Rōz	[6th Fravardīn]	6th Fravardīn
	....		
	Lesser 1st gahāmbār	10th Ābān	10th Ābān
	....	....	....
	*Greater 1st gahāmbār	[15th Ābān]	15th Ābān
	....	....	....
	Lesser Mihragān	16th Mihr	16th Mihr
	....	....	....
	*Greater Mihragān	[21st Mihr]	21st Mihr
	....	....	....
	*Lesser Fravardīgān	[26th–30th Spendārmad]	26th–30th Spendārmad
	6th gahāmbār	30th Spendārmad	30th Spendārmad
	Greater Fravardīgān	5 Gāthā days	5 Gāthā days
	Farewell to the fravašis	5th Gāthā day	5th Gāthā day
Year 4	Lesser Nō Rōz	1st Fravardīn	1st Fravardīn

TABLE 3. *Four Zoroastrian calendars*[1]

	Sasanian	Parthian	Khwārazmian	Sogdian: Bīrūnī	Sogdian: Manichaean	Sogdian: Mugh
				(*a*) Month-names		
1	Fravardīn	prwrtyn	βrwrtyn, βrwrtn	nwsrδ-	n'wsrδ-	n'wsrδ-
2	Ardvahišt	'rtywhšt	'rtwyš	*xrjn- (written jrjn)	xwrj/zn-	γwryzn-
3	Hordād	hrwtt	hrwt	nysn-	nysn-	nysn-
4	Tīr	[tyry]	tyry	bs'k-	ps'k-	—
5	Amurdād	[hmrtt]	hmrt	*'šn'xnt- (written 'šnδ'xnδ-)	šn'xnt-	'šn'kγ'nt-
6	Šahrevar	xštrywr	'xštry[wr]	*mzyxnd- (written mžyxnd-, mrxnd-)	γ/xz'n-	mz'yγγnt-, RBkγnt-
7	Mihr	[mtry]	mtr	*fγk- (written fγ'z-, fγ'k'n)	βγk'n-	βγk'n
8	Ābān	['pxwny]	y'p'xwn	'b'n	''b/p-	—
9	Ādur	'tr	'trw	fwγ-	βwγ-	βwγ-
10	Dai	[dtš]	'hwrym	*myšfwγ- (written ms'fwγ-)	myšβwγ-	(tym- in *Ancient Letters*)
11	Vahman	whmn	[whw]mn	žymd-	jymṯ-	zymt-
12	Spendārmad	—	'xšwm	xšwm-	'xšwm-, xšw[m-]	'γšwm-
				(*b*) Day-names		
1	Ohrmazd	—	(rymzd?)	*'xrmzd (written 'xrmžd)	xwrmzṯ'	(')γwrmzt
2	Vahman	[whmn]	whwmn	*xwmn (written jhynr!)	xwmn-	'γwm(')n
3	Ardvahišt	['rtywhšt]	['rtwyš][2]	'rd'xwšt	'rt'wxwšt	'rtγwšt
4	Šahrevar	[xštrywr]	'xštry[wr], [x]štr[y]wr	*xšywr (written xstšwr)	xšywr	'γšwr
5	Spendārmad	—	—	*spnd'rmd (written spnd'rmδ)	spnd'rmt/d	'sp'ntrmt (and other spellings)
6	Hordād	hrwtt	hrwt	*'rdd (written rdd)	'rt't	'rt't
7	Amurdād	hmrtt	hmrt	mrdd	mrt't	mrt't
8	Dai	dtš	'hwrym (or 1st day)[3]	*δšt (written δst)	''šδšcyẖ, δšcyy, δyšcyy	δtš
9	Ādur	'trw	'trw	*''š (written 'ts)	''š	''rt, 'rtt
10	Ābān	'pxwny	y'p'xwn[4]	*''bx (written 'njn)	''p/bwx	''pwγ'

11	Khvar	xw'r	'xyr	xwyr	xwr	γwr
12	Māh	m'x	(m'x?)	m'x	m'x	(m'γ)
13	Tīr	tyry	tyry	tyš	(*tyš)	[ty]š
14	Gōš	gwyrh[4]	γwšt[5]	γš	γwš	γwš
15	Dai	dtš	'hwrym (?)	δšt	see 8	mzyγ δtš
16	Mihr	mtry	mtr	*myš (written mxš)	(*myšy)	(*myšy)
17	Srōš	srwš	—	srš	srwš	sr'wš
18	Rašn	—	—	*ršn	—	—
19	Fravardīn	[prwrtyn]	βrwrtyn, βrwrtn	*frwrd (written frwδ)	frwrṯ	β/prw'rt
20	Vahrām	—	—	*wxšγn (written wxšγr)	wšγn	*wšγn
21	Rām	r'm	r'm	*r'm (written r'mn)	r'm	r'm
22	Vād	—	—	w'd	[w']t	[w']t
23	Dai	dtš	'hwrym (?)	*δšt	see 8, 15	see 8, 15
24	Dēn	—	—	δyn	(*δyn)	δyn'k
25	Ard	—	—	*'rdx (written 'rδx)	—	'rtγw
26	Aštād	—	št't	*'št'd (written 'št'δ)	—	(*'št't)
27	Asmān	—	—	smn	sm'n	(*'sm'n)
28	Zamyād	—	—	*zmwxtγ (written z'mjyd)	zmwxtwγ	'zmwγty
29	Māraspand	—	mrsp'nt, mrspnt'	*mnspnd (written nšynd)	mnspnd	mnspnt
30	Anagrān	—	wnrγ	*nγrn (written nγr)	—	nγrn'
Epagomena: Panz Gāh				Epagomena: 'rdwxšt	(*'rtxwšt)	'rtγwšt

[1] Of these calendars, the Parthian is the earliest attested, in the Nisā material of the 2nd–1st centuries B.C., and the Khwārazmian the latest. The latter is given here in the forms found on the ossuaries at Tok-kala, of the 8th century A.D. For a comparison of these with the forms given by Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, see V. A. Livshitz, "The Khwarezmian calendar", *AAntASH* XVI (1968), 444–6. Both the Parth. and Khwār. names are given here in transliteration, the better known Middle Persian ones in transcription. The Sogdian names were drawn up by Professor Dresden; see p. 1218, n. 1. Month-names in square brackets are missing, and are supplied from the corresponding day-names (and vice versa for day-names). Letters in square brackets are restored. Round brackets indicate doubtful forms.

[2] The form *'rtwhšt* occurs in the archives of Toprak-kala, see Livshitz, *op. cit.*, 445.

[3] On *'hwrym* see Henning, "The Choresmian documents", *Asia Major* XI, 170–1, 172; Livshitz, *op. cit.*, 445, n. 60.

[4] The Parth. and Khwār. forms are evidently derived from Av. *āpō vaŋuhīš* "good waters", the Pahl. from *āpō* alone.

[5] On *γwyrh* (< OIr. **gav-ayar-* "cow-day"?) see I. Gershevitch, "Amber at Persepolis" in *Studia Classica et Orientalia A. Pagliaro oblata* II (Rome, 1969), 197, with further references.

PART VI

RELIGIOUS HISTORY

In historical times religion has consistently been a major factor in Iranian life, and in the Sasanian period it was a chief determinant of the country's political and cultural direction. Chapter 22 is devoted to a general consideration of the development of religious thought in Iran: more particularly it examines the interaction of various strands of religious thinking in the Hellenistic period and after, and the convergence or divergence of these elements, and attempts to characterize the resulting trends.

The history of Zoroastrianism, whose canons had already been formulated in the pre-Alexandrian periods, forms the subject of Chapter 23; since written documents from the period are exceedingly sparse, the chapter attempts to utilize what information can be culled from numismatic, archaeological and art-historical evidence in determining religious development, but also uses epigraphic sources and post-Sasanian writing in a discussion of the Zoroastrian priesthood, fire-cult, heresies and popular religion. In view of the union of the Church and State in Sasanian Iran, the chapters on the political history, numismatics and institutions of Sasanian Iran also elucidate important aspects of religious history. Iranian world-view and common beliefs, rooted in religious thinking, have already been discussed in Chapter 10(*a*); they expose many elements of Zoroastrian popular religion. Chapters 24 and 25 examine the vicissitudes and history of Jewish and Christian communities in Iran and Mesopotamia. The treatment of religious minorities furnishes a major clue to the general religious policy and to the degree of power of the religious establishment in each period or under each king. Therefore these chapters have also a more general bearing on the religious history of Iran. Chapter 26 on Buddhism examines the spread of this faith in eastern Iran and the role of the Iranian Buddhists in the extension of it to Central Asia and China, as well as Iranian influence on Buddhist art and thought in north-western India and Central Asia.

Manichaeism, which spread far and wide, began and mainly flourished under the Sasanians. Chapter 27(*a*) treats of Mani's life and teaching with a view to determining their Iranian, as well as their non-Iranian components. Chapter 27(*b*) treats of Mazdakism, a gnostic religion which gave birth in the 6th century A.D. to a populist, communistic movement and continued to affect religious thinking in Iran and some neighbouring countries in the Islamic period. Special effort has been made to cull information from Islamic heresiographers and historians in order to elucidate both the Mazdakite doctrine and its formative impact on later politico-religious movements. Editor.

CHAPTER 22

DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT*

INTRODUCTION

Within Iran, during the period of nearly 1,000 years which separates the Greek and Islamic conquests, successive stages of religious history are interlocked in a manner scarcely paralleled earlier or later. Links are also to be found connecting Iran as a geographical focus with adjoining civilizations, and within the various strands and levels of the structures that can be detected.

After the Jewish diaspora, it was the religion of the Greek polis which appeared alongside and among the religions of those peoples which had become Iranian by the beginning of the first millennium B.C., but had been only semi-homogenized by the reforms of Zoroaster and the religious policies of the Achaemenians. As a result, the influence of Hellenistic religion, though less marked within Iran itself, forms an integral part of Iranian religious history, extending directly for half a millennium and indirectly for considerably longer. This raises the question of what Iranian features, in the stricter sense of the word, were embodied in this religion, not only in Iran itself but also beyond its borders.

The Arsacid kingdom, which appeared in the middle of the 3rd century B.C., alongside the Bactrian and Seleucid dominions and advanced principally at the expense of the latter, brought with it, or

* For very useful critical remarks and corrections to this chapter the author is indebted to Professor Mary Boyce and Dr A. D. H. Bivar (London), and for clarification of style in the final redaction of the English translation to Dr Flower (Berlin) and Mr Hubert Darke (Cambridge). The writing of the chapter was completed in 1970. Since then a number of pertinent works have been published which would have been desirable to consult. Among these, besides a number of articles, are the volumes of *Studia Iranica* (9 volumes), *Acta Iranica* (17 vols.), *Journal of Mithraic Studies* (3 vols.) and M. G. Vermaseren's admirable series: *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain*. Also several conferences have been convened since 1970 to explore aspects of Iranian religions, notably on Mithraism (Newcastle upon Tyne 1971, Teheran 1975, Rome 1978), Gnosticism (Stockholm 1973, Halle 1976, New Haven 1978), Iranian Central Asia (Budapest 1973 and 1976), Apocalypticism (Uppsala 1979). The transactions of most of these have already appeared in print. Selected items of the recent publications from 1970 to 1977 have been included in the bibliography, although not used.

stimulated, a rebirth of Iranian religious awareness in ethnic, linguistic, cultural and national terms. During this process, not only were older Zoroastrian traditions re-adopted but the relationship of the indigenous religions to the alien ones entered a new phase. In the West, after Judaism, they now had to come to terms with Christianity, characterized by its non-Chalcedonian forms, while in the East, they encountered Buddhism. Even more significant was the way in which qualitative distinctions were drawn across the whole expanse from Asia Minor/Syria to Central Asia between the religious forms of the Parthian Period and their foundations, both Iranian and Greek. A "higher", almost aristocratic piety begins to emerge in contrast to both the folk religion, which was linguistically and ethnically Iranian, drawing recruits from the peoples of the steppe, and the Greco-Iranian form of folk religion which lived on in areas of advanced civilization. It seems likely that here the determining social factors can be detected once again towards the end of the epoch in various gnosticisms and mysteries which render it particularly difficult to discover the specifically Iranian elements, in the former case because of the transformation of myths, spiritual concepts and theologumena of Egyptian, Semitic, Jewish and Christian origin, and in the latter because they re-interpret the rites of ancient Asia Minor.

In the Sasanian period the conflicting and variously interrelated tendencies of the preceding epoch finally sorted themselves out when a consolidated state religion established its own orthodoxy. Beyond this it is easier than before to recognize religious dogmas and sects which were opposed by Zoroastrianism. What appears in the finished form of the former epoch is to be found in a scattered and fragmentary form in Zoroastrianism, which was fashioned in part by precisely these elements. While it is correct to interpret the fundamental processes which were at work in the Seleucid period as syncretistic and those of the Parthian period as competitive, the incompatibility which succeeded them in the Sasanian period turns out to be essentially the result of mental idiosyncrasy.

The conditions indicated here depend considerably on the viewpoint of the observer. In a history of Iran there can be no question of presenting the large quantity of relevant material in an exhaustive fashion. The task confronting the historian is shaped rather by the circumstance that Iran – or more precisely, Iranian territory and those religions which originated or became established there – has to be taken as the point of

reference. Such a condensed account of a thousand years of religious history whose horizontal and vertical dimensions are Iranian and non-Iranian in equal measure, raises problems which are principally ones of defining, selecting and evaluating the character and importance of the part played by one religious movement in the development of another. Accordingly the aim of the survey which follows is to combine analysis with factual information.

THE SELEUCID PERIOD

(a) *Hellenism in Iran: the religion of the polis*

A factor which inevitably stimulated religious development was the founding in the territory of the fallen Achaemenian empire of Greek cities endowed with something resembling the constitution of a polis. The Seleucids, who showed a greater interest in this than Alexander the Great, displayed a degree of care in the foundation and the organization of their cities which remains without parallel in the world's history – and this included a concern for the religion of their subjects.[1] What this seems to have meant for their Iranian subjects is that the religion which belonged to a better social organism, namely that of the polis, was pressed upon them; in Syria – the Jews are a special case – and in Babylonia it was otherwise. Here local traditions were encouraged. This latter represented a departure from Alexander's principles and is, moreover, ambiguous in its significance. Alexander's intention to shift the focus of his empire to the East, thus giving fuller weight to its Iranian constituents, would undoubtedly have influenced religious policies had he lived longer. The Seleucids, however, with their base at Antioch on the Orontes from 300 B.C., regarded the Iranian satrapies as border territories. The tolerance they displayed towards the religion of Babylonia was a continuation of the same policies which the Achaemenians had pursued, not only there but in Magnesia ad Maeandrum, in Jerusalem and Egypt. Unlike the Achaemenians, however, they did not set out to create a network of centres of allegiance of their own; their intention was to revive Babylonian religion, perhaps for the specific purpose of competing with Persian religion, particularly in its Zoroastrian form. The encouragement of Hellenism in the cities may have had a similar objective.

[1] See for example, Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, pp. 150–9; *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, nos 1–3, 9–13, 15–26; Plutarch, *Moralia* x, 790 A.

The distinction between polis and non-polis was maintained by the Greeks in Iran, not out of principle – for they would undoubtedly have allowed an exception such as Tyre and Carthage in Iran as well – but because they held the view that no community was sufficiently well organized to merit the title of polis. Instead they introduced the names *politeuma* and *katoikia* to denote communities which were distinguished from the village by at least some of the characteristic features which went to make up the polis.[1] Poleis and politeumata were alike in that both had a religious centre while in Iran we can perhaps apply what is generally true of the polis to the katoikia. Nowhere, it seems, was there firm support for the polis constitution in the form of a numerically significant Greco-Macedonian population, except at Seleucia on the Eulaeus (ancient Susa) which was able to retain its constitution for centuries. Nevertheless, outside the limits of direct Hellenistic influence, there was a survival of Iranian piety and religion without whose vitality the Sasanian restoration would have been unthinkable. It must have been hidden to the eyes of the city populations and the classical authors and have happened in the countryside, since there were hundreds of square miles of territory that was still purely Iranian, with old ways presumably surviving virtually untouched.

The concept of the Greek polis necessarily entails self-government through a council and an assembly of the people as well as officials who are responsible to both. It has its own law, its own finances and troops, and its own form of worship within the basic structure of Greek religion, into which local deities, traditions and myths may be incorporated along with their temples, gymnasia and theatres, each with its respective ritual prestige.[2] Even where there is no explicit literary evidence and as yet no archaeological proof, we can assume that this pattern spread throughout Iranian territory:[3] to the East, as far as the four cities founded by Alexander himself or at his instigation, and occasionally revived by the Diadochi – Alexandria Margiane (Marv), Alexandria Areion (Herāt), Alexandria Arachaton (Qandahār), and Alexandreschate (Khujand/Leninabad). It reached the seven, or perhaps even eleven, cities which are said to have been founded in Sogdiana and Bactria, one of which may be identifiable as Ai Khānum in northern

[1] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1302 b. 16, 1332 b. 31, 1266 b. 2. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones*, 229. 60, 72; 238. 2; 592. 1.

[2] [On the administration of Greek and other cities in Iran see also pp. 8ff and 713ff.]

[3] Pliny, VI. 46–9, 61, 93; Strabo II. I. 2, 4–6; XI. II. 4; Justinus XII. V. 13; Isidorus Characenus and Stephanus Byzantius s.vv., etc.

Afghanistan. Later it spread as far as the three Seleuceias on the Erythraean Sea, the Eulaeus and the Hedyphon, the two Apameas in Mesene and the Sitakene (or Apolloniatis), the two Antiochs on the Tigris and its tributary, the Tornadotos; on to Artemita (Chalasar) at the foot of the Zagros mountains and Chala in the Chalonitis; to the Europus in Media, which had been the ancient and venerable city of Rhagae before Seleucus I changed its name; through Parthia and Areia (Calliope, Charis, Hecatompylos, Achaia, Soteira); into Persis, where an Antioch existed alongside an indigenous dynasty whose fire cult and worship of Ahura Mazdā, distinct from the sacred fires of Parthia, Drangiana and Media, was to prove important for a later age; and into "Scythia" where a further Antioch is mentioned. It penetrated the conquests and new foundations of the Bactrian Greek kings which extended the frontiers set by Alexander: Eucratideia in Bactria, Demetrias in Arachosia, Euthydemia in the Punjab. It even appeared in such improbable places as that site in the middle of the steppe beyond the Jaxartes where the governor Demodamas raised an altar to the Seleucid god Apollo of Didyma in 282 B.C., in order to establish a symbol of his dominion against rebellious nomads; and it also reached the island of Ikaros (now Failaka) in the Persian Gulf, where there were at least two Greek temples. The distances covered by this "penetration" are certainly remarkable, but in spite of this it was thin and very much localized.

Greek and Iranian gods and kings

The Greek gods, whose cult spread in this way, were not, of course, placed in jeopardy by the Iranian ones. The Greek concept of truth made it an easy matter to see the Iranian names for the gods as equivalents of the Greek ones, so that one can establish the existence only of a basic belief in the identity of the gods under varying names, and not of any actual theocrasies. The same phenomenon is more problematic when viewed from the Iranian angle. What kind of concept of truth was it that permitted the Iranians to see in Ahura Mazdā a Zeus as well as a Bel; in Angra Mainyu a Hades as well as a Nergal; in Mithra an Apollo, a Hermes or a Helios just as easily as a Shamash, a Men or a Sabazios; in Anāhitā a Hera, an Aphrodite, an Artemis or an Athene as readily as an Ishtar, a Nana or a Ma; and to see a Hercules in Verethraghna?

Equally sparse is our information with regard to the problem of what the veneration of Greek kings meant to the Iranian people. If Alexander was supposed to have come to Iran having consciously adopted the mythical rôle of a god's son – and there is considerable evidence to support this view – then it may have been more than a merely formal or political step when he exacted the proskynesis, not in the sense of prostration but of the ceremonial kissing of the hand to Alexander, combined with a bow, as previously subjects had done to gain the Great King's favour. This would make sense of the fact that when he returned from India in 324 B.C., he even called upon the Greeks to acknowledge him officially as a god.[1] But all this did not suffice to sustain or renew the theory of reverence for monarchy in Iran, or even to establish a pattern. It needed fresh impulses, brought forth chiefly by Antigonus the One-eyed and his son Demetrius Poliorcetes, and then taken up by other jealous dynasts, before the ruler cult could be introduced into Iran on a more permanent footing. The faith of Seleucus I was of a somewhat conservative nature, and Antiochus I likened his father to Zeus by bestowing on him the title Nicator, thereby establishing a precedent for the official deification of kings after their death. It is possible that the example of Ptolemy II Philadelphus had some influence in the case of Antiochus II whose title Theos cannot have been just an empty word; and although this kind of deification was at first only a local phenomenon (in Miletus), his coins none the less depict Hercules on the rock, Apollo on the omphalos and the horned horse's head – now heraldically stylized. By contrast, Seleucus II Callinicus made virtually no attempt to spread his own cult but was active in encouraging the cult of Apollo and Athene; moreover he combined the cult of the dead queen Stratonice Thea with that of her protectress Aphrodite. He did not have his own title put on his coins. Neither did Seleucus III Soter and Antiochus III the Great, who stamped the image of Apollo or an elephant on the reverse of their coins – the elephant here having nothing to do with Indian theories of monarchy.[2] Even more striking is the absence of any charismatic or mythical references in the consolidation of the dynastic cult under Antiochus III. Only one decree is compiled on the assumption that the kings but not the queens had cults in their lifetime, that from Antioch in Persis[3] which lists with their usual titles all the kings from Seleucus I to Antiochus III (together with his eldest son). This is different from Egypt, while the formula "the

[1] Aelian II. 19. [2] Cf. p. 847. [3] Dittenberger, *Or. Graeci Inscriptiones*, 233.

King and His ancestors"[1] may possibly be a Persian interpretation of the Hellenistic reshaping of Greek or Macedonian hero cults which was taking place here. Apart from these documents our sources for Iran are exhausted.

On the basis of these facts we must give a decidedly negative answer to the question of whether the Seleucid kings adopted charismatic conceptions of monarchy from their subjects for reasons that relate to religion as a political force or even whether they believed themselves to be personally legitimized by the *x*^{v}*arnah* through which Achaemenian kings had exercised world dominion on behalf of Ahura Mazdā. Of the statements which can be made about the ancient Iranian or Aryan kings, not a single one applies to the Seleucids. On the other hand interpretations were known in Greece which approached very nearly to the Persian concept. In pre-Hellenistic drama Darius is described as "one like the gods in counsel, a god for the Persians and godlike",[2] and there was a description, inaccurate and abbreviated, it is true, of the New Year's festivities in Persepolis in which the king occupied the central position.[3] The lack of influence of this on the Seleucids appears to show that even with regard to the ideology of kingship, Iranian religion was consciously neglected. The fact that some of the Seleucids married Iranian princesses (Seleucus I married the Bactrian Apama who may have been descended from the Achaemenians, while Antiochus III married Laodice, daughter of Mithridates II of Pontus) is hardly proof that they held the blood and inheritance of a queen in such esteem as the Achaemenians had done in the case of consanguineous marriages.

Conversely, with certain exceptions, the Iranians did not accept the Seleucid king as their legitimate ruler. Leaving aside at the moment any reasons connected with dynastic family history or politics, this may have been a result of the fact that the assimilation of Ahura Mazdā and Zeus did not on the whole go so far as certain groups of Magians or literati were wont to proclaim, and also of the fact that Apollo and not Zeus was the Archeget of the Seleucids. The Oracles of Hystaspes, which were to play a part in Hellenistic and Christian apocalyptic ideas as a kind of Iranian leaven, recall in many ways national traditions – they were more clearly anti-Hellenistic in tendency, and took up fewer intermediary positions than were adopted, for example, by the Hellenizing

[1] *Ibid.*, 223. 23ff; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscript. Graec.*, 22. 26ff; 167. 7ff; 370. 41.
[2] Aeschylus, *Persai*, 652–6, 711, 857.
[3] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* VIII. iii. 1–4; VIII. v. 21; VIII. vii. 1, 11.

Jews. Just as Berosus tried to make the new rulers aware of Babylonian affairs, so the Iranian Pharnuchos of Antioch–Nisibis wrote a Persian history,[1] but this seems not to have been a document of Iranian Hellenism.

Résumé

Paradoxically Hellenistic religion contains fewer Iranian elements in Iran itself than it does outside Iran, for example, in Asia Minor. Not even the second half of this phenomenon, which is discussed below, can be said to apply to the writings of the Stoics, which may be mentioned in this context in so far as they belong in a broad sense to the philosophy of religion. It was from towns within the Seleucid empire that the early Stoics came, but despite their cosmopolitanism, they felt least at home in the Seleucid empire and definitely not at all in its Iranian part. The only exception is Archedemus, the disciple of Diogenes of Babylon, who returned from Athens to Babylon (or Seleuceia) and founded a school there.[2] But this did not establish Stoic thought in Iran any more than Iran contributed anything to the Stoa.

We cannot properly understand the nature of Hellenism in Iran if we try to construct a particular type of Hellenism which transcends geographical factors, as we can in the case of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor. The converse of this, however, is true. Hellenism in Iran shows its catalysing power in that it became absorbed, and constituted a *Hellenized Iranianism* – a totally different phenomenon from any conceivable kind of Iranian Hellenism – through the religion of the Parthian period and the Sasanian restoration, right through to Shiʿite movements in the ʿAbbasid era.

(*b*) *Iranian elements in Hellenism: the Magians*

The problem of Iran's contribution to Hellenism in terms of ideas and symbolism is exceedingly controversial. The only people from whom we can expect some enlightenment are the Magians of Asia Minor, because as a group they represent a quantity that can be more readily delimited than can an idea or a symbol. But with them we encounter the fresh difficulty that their opinions, as far as they are known to us – there were probably Magi living in Iran itself untouched by alien thought – were syncretistic even in pre-Hellenistic times. Thus, the Hellenized Magians are more complex in character than, for example, Hellenized Iranians, Jews or Syrians.

[1] Jacoby, *Fragmentea*, vol III C, no. 694.

[2] Plutarch, *Moralia* VII, 605 B.

Ever since the transformation of Asia Minor through the influence of Iran in Achaemenian times, the Greeks had known of the Magians, who had entered the country with the Persian aristocracy and settled there in colony-like associations. By that time they had lost their original identity as the priestly caste of the Medes. Under the Achaemenians they maintained the newly legitimized observance of the rites connected with the fire-cult, libations, blood sacrifices, burials(?), and liturgies for other incidental ceremonies. To the extent that all this (including probably even blood sacrifices) was susceptible of a Zoroastrian interpretation, it can be said to have added a Zoroastrian element to ideas already transformed into ritual and derived from the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Armenians, Cappadocians and other peoples whose names are unknown to us. Consequently, the character of the prophecy of Zoroaster was altered and no longer appeared as it had been in eastern Iran. In such a context we cannot make a choice between those elements which were *regarded* in the Hellenistic period as Iranian and therefore foreign to the Greeks[1] and those elements which were in fact Iranian but were regarded as indigenous to the Greeks as, for example, certain sacrifices to natural forces, or a demonology derived from the deification of the struggle between Good and Evil.

The history of the word Magi(an) has evolved more or less by chance. We cannot say with certainty whether μάγος and *magu-* represent a Greek or ancient Iranian word inherited from Indo-European, or whether – given the fact that μάγος does not appear in Homer and is not found until Heraclitus, Pythagoras and Democritus – the Greeks borrowed the word from Iranian. If the latter is the case, then the activities of the μάγοι, namely μαγεία, would in the first instance have been understood relatively correctly as the theology of the Magians and the service of the gods (θεῶν θεραπεία), and only later, when the activities of the Magians were confused with sorcery, did it come to be thought of – relatively incorrectly – as the phenomenon that has since been known as magic, and more especially as black magic. What we finally understand by "Magians", then, is a group of people that ranges from those who possess and practise supernatural knowledge to sorcerers, and thence to tricksters and charlatans. There is some justification for confusing the Magians with the Chaldeans, in view of the fact that their divinatory arts involved techniques employing astrological methods. For what applies to the Magians also applies to these

[1] Cf. such writers as Herodotus, Xenophon, Theopompus and Strabo; all texts in Bidez-Cumont, *Les Mages Hellénisés* II.

latter and indeed, both groups have a similar origin; for they neutralized the tensions between, on the one hand, the master-knowledge of a privileged caste (the Magians) or of a priesthood that was essential to the mantic requirements of the Neo-Babylonian kings (the Chaldeans as a group)[1] and, on the other hand, the actions, customs and institutions, together with their raison d'être, which were necessary to assure the life of tribes, families and individuals (among the substratum peoples in the Median and Achaemenian empire and among the Kaldāya/Kaśdīm/Χαλδαῖοι as a people).[2]

But whatever justification may be found for confusing the Chaldeans and Magians and idealizing them as bearers of primeval wisdom, the process clearly went too far. Thus an entire literature was based on names which were supposed, by their Persian sound, to establish a precise link with the Magians. Among such names, Zoroastres, Zaratas and others like these have nothing at all to do with the historical Zoroaster. In Hystaspes there survive very distant reminiscences of the two Vishtaspas, the patron of Zoroaster and the father of Darius I, about whom, it was true, it was possible to make the general statement that as kings in ancient times they had helped truth to triumph. Ostanes seems to have been named after the legendary companion of Xerxes I and teacher of Democritus of Abdera,[3] but as yet there is no evidence of a figure of a similar name in Iranian tradition on whom the older or the younger one could have been modelled. The names of less well known Magians were consciously derived from other traditions, even though they were sometimes mentioned in the same breath as Zoroaster, Hystaspes and Ostanes. Cyprianus, for example, the precursor of Dr Faustus, was named after the renowned bishop of Carthage, and Dardanus after the mythical ancestor of the Trojans. The fact that the great majority of the traditions ascribed to Iranian Magians were wrongly said to be Iranian should not mislead us into excluding the Greek Magian texts wholesale from the history of Iranian religion. From the Greek point of view these express a romanticized conception of the East which had earlier been seen with relation to Egypt. Seen though in the context of Iranian religion, the Greek Magian texts are an indication of this religion's susceptibility to mis-interpretation.

The attitude of the Magians to the Evil Principle was misleading, and

[1] Herodotus I. 181, 183 and Daniel I. 4; II. 2, 4.

[2] Luckenbill, *Ancient Records* I §§793f, 806, 810; II §§31ff, 39ff, 234; *Babylonian Chronicle* I. 32–7.

[3] Pliny xxx. 8ff; Diogenes Laertius IX. 34 (chap. 7).

misunderstanding resulted. It need hardly be said that this principle was worshipped neither among nomadic tribes who were of Iranian stock or who spoke Iranian, nor within Zoroaster's sphere of influence, nor under the Achaemenians, even though it was acknowledged for what it was in the person of a divine representative – Angra Mainyu. In addition there was a chthonic deity who was worshipped by the so-called Derbikes in north-eastern Iran[1] and the Scythians of Pontus.[2] In archaic Iranian this deity had probably been called (*Spanta) *Aramati and had been taken over into Armenian as Sandaramet to denote the underworld, and as Spandaramet to denote Dionysos. She survived in Zoroaster's hymns as Ārmaiti, "appropriate sentiment",[3] while in the younger Avesta she passed into the group of the Amesha Spentas where she was linked, as all the other members of the group, with one of the elements, in this case Earth.[4] Besides this there was the god Airyaman, probably a personification of the priesthood and a godly healer, healing being the special skill of the priests. The *Vidēvdāt* closes with an account of Airyaman's deeds in which the authors – according to a common guess, the historical Magians of the Achaemenian period – perhaps intended to portray him as the prototype and representative of their class. Apart from him they worshipped the Earth, which brought them into line with pre-Zoroastrian Iranian piety, non-Iranian tellurian piety and a spiritualized and newly materialized Zoroastrianism. The ambivalent character of the Greek Hades, who could be described as the Dreadful and Violent One[5] and as the Keeper of Earth's treasures,[6] caused Hades in Asia Minor to be identified both with Angra Mainyu, or Ahriman, and with Aramati. Some Magians, as worshippers of the latter and also of Airyaman, appear to us at first sight as worshippers of the evil god. Popular etymologies, associating the three names linguistically, may also be partly responsible. According to a trustworthy tradition[7] it is reported:

The Magian Zoroaster ... called the one (god) Oromazes and the other Areimanius, and he further maintained that of all perceptible things the former most nearly resembled light, while the latter most nearly resembled darkness and ignorance ... He also taught men to bring votive-offerings and thanks-offerings to Oromazes, but to Areimanius only averting and

[1] Strabo XI. 11. 8.
[2] Herodotus IV. 59.
[3] Yasna 28. 3; 30. 7; 31. 9 *et passim*.
[4] Yasna 16. 10; Yasht 1. 25; Vidēvdāt 2. 10; 3. 35; 18. 64 *et passim*.
[5] Homer, *Iliad* 9. 158; 15. 188; Hesiod, *Theogonia* 453ff.
[6] Hesiod, *Erga* 465.
[7] Plutarch, *Moralia* V, 369 E–F.

dismal offerings. For they crush a plant called *omomi* in a mortar, calling upon Hades and Darkness, and then they mix it with the blood of a slaughtered wolf and carry it to a gloomy and sunless place, where they cast it away. For they even believe that of the plants some belong to the good god, others to the evil demon, and of the animals they believe that dogs, birds and hedgehogs, for example, belong to the good god while serpents and mice belong to the evil one; for this reason they count a man fortunate if he kills a great number of them.

The tellurian piety of Magians of this type was also acquainted with sacrifices to the *yazata*s such as Anāhitā and thus to the flowing water that brings fertility; to Mithra and thus to the light that illumines the earth; and to Ādhar and thus to fire. As a result of misunderstanding but also of genuine development, this was turned into the comprehensive science of a magical-chemical technology, complete with a philosophy that spiritualized all natural forces. This philosophy is comparable to that contained, for example, in the *physika* literature of Hellenistic Egypt. Consequently, the Magians became not only *physikoi* but sometimes even alchemists. The connection between terrestrial and sidereal elements, which was known both in the cosmology of the Neo-Babylonian Chaldeans and in the chemistry of the early Egyptian and Mesopotamian metallurgists, made the qualification of the Magians as astrologers seem plausible and it is, in fact, less incorrect than their description as alchemists. The reliance on celestial events (eclipses of the sun, shooting stars, extraordinary conjunctions of stars), and climatic and terrestrial phenomena (fires, floods, earthquakes) was just as essential to the divinatory practices of the Magians as their reliance on physiognomies, corpses, animal behaviour, dreams or the casting of lots. But what was still more embarrassing was their attitude to destiny and to the spirits whose calamitous visitations on mankind (disasters, diseases, famines) can assume cosmic dimensions. The one who commands the orbits of the heavenly bodies – we do not know if it was the Magians who called him *zrvān akarana* "unlimited time" – could be associated with the most diverse Aion concepts, which in Hellenism drew further nourishment from numerous other speculations. Even if it were not for sources such as Porphyry's learned account,[1] demons of the Ahrimanian kind (and hence the opponents of the good spirits) would have been seen as the ones to whom the Magians offered blood

[1] Aurelius Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* x. 9; cf. Porphyrius, *De abstinentia* II. 36–43 and Pliny xxx. 11.

sacrifices. These demons were later classified, and perhaps worshipped, by Cornelius Labeo.[1]

It can be stated, then, that the Magians accelerated a certain internationalizing of Iranian folk-religion. It assumed different forms, depending on the geographical distance from centres of Zoroastrianism – not only in the East but also in Galatia, Phrygia, Lydia, Pontus and Cappadocia – and on the extent to which the Magians developed from the 1st century B.C. But this takes us beyond the limits of the Seleucid period. It may be noted, however, that there must have been societies, schools or communities of Magians not only in the areas already mentioned but also in Babylonia, Arabia, Syria, Ethiopia and Egypt. There were even isolated representatives in the western Mediterranean. It is paradoxical, perhaps, to mention at the end of this geographical survey that presumably there were individual Magians or Magian groups in Iran itself in this period; and yet virtually nothing is known of them,[2] although they must have been sufficiently vital to have survived into the Sasanian period more effectively than their co-religionists elsewhere who lasted into Byzantine times. There is, however, one exception which can be inferred from texts which were probably originally composed in Persis.

The Oracles of Hystaspes

In view of the Hellenization of Iranian religious traditions at the hands of the Magians of Asia Minor, made possible by the lack of clarity in those traditions themselves, it is difficult to know whether we should look to the Magians of Persis in order to detect a clearly national Iranian basis in the Oracles of Hystaspes. For this would imply that in the conflict of loyalties between Greek and Persian monarchy they had in a way decided in favour of the latter, which would not be in keeping with their characteristic internationalism. And yet this is precisely what seems to have happened. We can assume that there existed a particular group which, although having reservations about the Achaemenian dynasty (who used, for example, to desecrate the Earth by the burial of the dead), was none the less united in its hatred of Alexander and his successors, thus setting themselves apart from those time-serving aristocrats who must have been ultimately responsible for constructing a Persian genealogy for Alexander. But this does not explain why the

[1] Aur. Aug., *De civ. Dei* VIII. 13; cf. Iamblichus III. 31 (175, 15) and Arnobius, *Adv. nat.* IV. 12.
[2] Ammianus Marcellinus XXIII. 6. 32–6 is odd.

outcome was not a rebellion – albeit with a mythological justification – but a prophecy which transcendentalized the re-awaited monarchy in a most un-Persian manner, to the extent that the king now occupied a position which had hitherto been reserved for his x^{v}arnah and his *fravashī*. There is an explanation for this which includes the system of the Magians and thereby strengthens the hypothesis that the Oracles of Hystaspes did indeed originate with them. Politico-religious prophecy is the universalized special case of inductive divination which was the proper domain of the Magians; but the mantic apparatus which they required necessarily coincided with that of astrology, since the phenomena by which they were guided were the same ones whose origin or susceptibility to influences were discussed in astrological science. The astrological world view had grown more powerful than the royalist one and of necessity brought about the transcendentalization of the expected king. In a category of that age one can almost call it an astrologization, and perhaps the texts say as much when they assert the same things about the planet Jupiter, the Great King of astrology, as they do about that Great King who must be the future saviour born of the seed of Hystaspes:[1]

Hystaspes . . . says, after he has described the iniquity of this last of all ages, that the pious and the faithful will be divided from the evildoers, and will raise their hands to heaven with weeping and wailing and beg for Jupiter's mercy. Jupiter will look down upon the earth, he will hear the voice of mankind, and he will destroy the sinners.

And:[2]

That will be the age when justice is banished, when innocence is despised and the evil ones drag away the good men as their prey. No laws, no order, no rigour of military discipline will survive. None will honour the aged, none will acknowledge the duty of piety, none will take pity on women and children: all will unite and conspire against the divine law, against the law of nature. The whole earth will be despoiled, as though by a universal pillaging. When this has happened the righteous ones and those who follow the truth will set themselves apart from the evil ones and will flee into desert places. When this becomes known the godless one will be ablaze with anger and will come with a great army, and with all his soldiers he will surround the hill on which the righteous ones are abiding, so that he might seize them. But when these see that they are shut in and besieged on all sides, they will cry with a loud voice to God and will entreat heavenly succour, and God will hear them and will send a Great King from the heavens, who will snatch them away and free them, and will destroy all the godless ones with fire and sword.

[1] Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, VII. 78. 2. [2] *Ibid.* VII. 17. 9–11.

Much of the evidence suggests that these and similar texts originated in Persis, either after the *Frataraka (rather than *Frātadāra) had made themselves independent there or at least in connection with this event. The *terminus post quem* may be either the reign of Antiochus I (294 or 280–261 B.C.) or that of Seleucus IV (187–175 B.C.). So by the start of the 2nd century at the latest, Alexander and his successors were typified as godless, and some unknown campaign against the Magians, who used to sacrifice on hills,[1] became endowed with eschatological significance. The astrological background of the Great King means that we cannot see in him a figure coming like a Saoshyant, as in later texts. He is a projection of the earthly king and the vision in whose framework the prophecy is cast has a distinctly political import.

Further developments

The apocalyptic picture or framework which originated in this way lost its concrete character through becoming stereotyped. This had the consequence that it became so readily transferable that in different historical situations it could accommodate new contents through small but significant changes in wording.

Under Mithridates of Pontus (120–63 B.C.), the great and implacable enemy of Rome, it was said of Hystaspes, "who was king of the Medes a very long time ago": "Long before that Trojan breed [the founders of Rome] became established, he predicted that the empire and the name of Rome would be obliterated",[2] and with reference to the chaos which may be expected in the last days of the world: "Dominion will revert to Asia. Then the East shall once again be mistress and the West shall be her slave."[3]

The heathen emperor was superseded by the Christian one within the lifetime of Lactantius; the dethronement of the ungodly one by Christ was thus foreshadowed, and the apocalyptic writings, which at one time had contested the legitimacy of the emperor, now represented more or less his own doctrines. It is obvious that under these circumstances the Oracles of Hystaspes were to lose their original meaning once more and Christ was substituted for the Great King.[4] Finally we find, in the so-called Tübingen Theosophy,[5] that Hystaspes, king of the Persians or Chaldeans, drew up a chronicle from Adam down to the

[1] Appian XII. 65; Herodotus I. 131; Strabo XV. 3. 13.
[2] Lactantius, *op. cit.* VII. 15. 19.
[3] *Ibid.* VII. 15. 11.
[4] Lactantius, *Epitome*, 67. 1; Clemens Alex., *Stromata* VI. V. (43. 1).
[5] Aristocritus 2. 68b (p. 95).

Byzantine emperor Zeno (died A.D. 491) in which he maintained that the universe would reach its perfection after 6,000 years.

The eschatology of the Magians just sketched had originally been a national, Iranian phenomenon. It then became Hellenized, internationalized and Christianized. Now it has become nothing more than chiliasm.

THE PARTHIAN PERIOD

(a) *Responses to Iranian religion*

Since the Parthian period overlapped with the Seleucid era through the co-existence of Arsacid and Greek rulers in various regions, the religion of this period could not be a uniform phenomenon. As far as its Iranian elements are concerned, they can most plausibly be explained in terms of a new combination of historical circumstances, in which the working out of tension between the culture of nomadic tribes from the steppe and that of an imperial tradition is re-enacted – a tension which had also existed in Zoroaster's time and in that of the Achaemenians. It is less likely that "Parthian religion" derived from an endogenous revival of Zoroastrianism. But these re-Iranizations remained obscured at first by Hellenism until they could find their own identity. This has, of course, consequences for basic religious attitudes to historical facts, and this is precisely the issue in the Parthian period in which Hellenism and the convictions inside and outside Iran which had found their identity through Hellenism, as well the people maintaining those convictions, were compelled to come to terms somehow with Seleucid, Roman and Arsacid authority, whose laws became increasingly symbolic of the laws of this world in toto. One discovers that people frequently did not submit or adapt to these laws in an enlightened fashion, but attempted to overcome them through apocalyptic or gnostic thought or revelation.

Early apocalyptics

The prophecies of the Oracles of Hystaspes remained alive in Parthian times and must have been disseminated in the Parthian empire. We cannot otherwise account for the readiness of the Manichaeans to accept the apocalyptic ideology of the Book of Enoch and the synoptic gospelists, nor can we explain the sources of inspiration for the eschatology of the Mithraic mysteries and of Zoroastrianism. Motifs and patterns taken from them, together with other materials, were even

being worked into the Vahman Yasht, where a fresh and strong Iranian nationalistic bias was needed to underline the contrast with other, post-Hellenic opponents (Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks). In the Sasanian period, this Yasht became part of a whole corpus of apocalypses and apocalyptic passages in other Pahlavi writings, while in the Parthian period but outside the Parthian area, there existed apocalypses, first purely Jewish and later on Christianized, from 200 B.C. to 150 A.D.

Since there is no direct evidence of Parthian apocalyptics and the picture of history in the Hystaspes texts is less well elaborated than in the Jewish and Pahlavi books, it is those latter whose apocalyptic ideas are of primary importance for study. Here, we must take into account the possibility that there were at work structurally similar factors which had already played a determining rôle in Parthian areas. Inferences drawn from those factors may explain the accord of essential trends more adequately than any analysis of similarities between sources in the eastern Mediterranean and Iran in terms of influence, mission or conversion.

These trends show history as a self-contained and fully visible sequence of events, which can be interpreted as a striving towards the fulfilment of a divine plan, involving the hypostatization of divine and human forms of expression and modes of appearance into forces, angels or spirits, especially the hypostatization of Evil into a semi-personified power capable of acting on its own initiative and whose opponent is the hypostasis of Good; as well as the increasingly common description of Evil and Good as Darkness and Light. They suggest that the Iranian and Jewish theological awareness of history was a part of the same process of ideological homogenization, both patterns being, arguably, under the strong influence of resistance to Hellenism. If this is true, then the value of individual traditions for establishing how things stood is not conclusive but merely indicative (cf. Daniel's Chaldean studies, his office as a Magian, the contest of the Pages, the festival of Purim, Asmodaeus, the fiery stream of molten metal which will punish and destroy the evil ones).[1]

On the other hand it is precisely details like these which show that the most important traditions on both sides, namely those relating to the redeemer figure, are totally unconnected. The Son of David makes final the cleansing of Jerusalem from its defilement by the ungodly; the Son of Man who appears in the heavens is at first made into the symbol

[1] Daniel 1. 3–7, 17–20; III Ezra 3. 1–4, 42; Esther 9. 26; Tobit 3. 8; Enoch 67. 4–9.

of the coming of God's dominion, and then into the representative of the people of God; the Messiah from the seed of Aaron is a high-priestly counterpart to the Son of David. These redeemers are different from the Great King or from the Saoshyants of Zoroastrianism, in which the eschatological aspect of Zoroaster's work of preservation has become autonomous.[1] Such figures are comparable only in that they are all included in a chronology of dramatized history of salvation. They would only share in its full homogeneity if they had also engendered it – which is not the case. If there was a special redeemer figure reflecting the conditions typical of Parthian history and society, we do not know of it.

Origins of gnosis

In the investigation of a specifically Iranian background to gnosis, the starting point used to be gnosis in its stage of perfection, namely Manichaeism, as it appears in the Middle Persian accounts preserved in the Turfan texts. Numerous parallels to them were pointed out in the religion of the Mandaeans and in western gnosticism. The ins and outs of backward dating were exceedingly complicated, and this has obscured beyond recognition the fundamental metamorphosis which took place between the gnostic systems and concepts of salvation on the one hand, and the older religions on the other. What this amounts to is that the value which is set on the world becomes so negative that a comprehensive knowledge, in which the organ of cognition becomes one with its object, takes on a quality that transcends the world and thus effects salvation. In the structure of this knowledge, which has to overcome an anti-cosmic dualism, lie the psychological origins of gnosis. Its first stage is the hypostatization of the highest spiritual power of man and the divine power of the same name, occasionally with its symbolization as a halo of light, or in speculation about the interrelationship of macrocosm and microcosm. In this latter case the divine power also forms part of the world soul, which corresponds to a part of the human soul. *Nous*, *pneuma* and *logos* (and several other concepts of wisdom), *ruaḥ*, *ḥokhmah* and *torah* (together with de-functionalized expressions for the knowledge of divine secrets), *vohu manah*, *čistay* and *daēnā* (and possibly other amesha spentas or parts of the soul) are all comparable here. This convergence of notions may be understood in terms of homo-

[1] From Yasna 34. 13; 46. 3; 48. 12 to Yasna 9. 2; 24. 5; Yasht 13. 17; 19. 22,89 to Yasna 26. 10; Yasht 13. 128ff; 19. 92 to *Greater Bundahišn* 34. 3–27 and esp. *Ayātkār i Žāmāspīk*, 17. 9–14, etc.

genization of knowledge structures. The inclusion of Iranian elements raises no difficulty, for their development is clearly documented from the Gathas to the translation of the key expressions in the Pahlavi Yasna, in part through to the younger Avesta and the *Hādokht Nask*, as well as to the acceptance of *dāniš̌n* and *frazānagīh* in Pahlavi writings.[1]

But as far as the dichotomy of these hypostases into the pneumatical self of the respective gnosis is concerned, this is more distinct in the Greek and Jewish varieties than in the Iranian. For the poles of dualism, which were touched upon in connection with apocalyptic ideas, do not correspond to the dualism of *mēnōg* and *gētīg*, assuming that dualism was exactly the same in Parthian times as in the Pahlavi writings. But only a correspondence of this kind, essential for the understanding of the *salvator salvandus*, would allow for gnosis. It would be possible simply to postulate its existence for the Iranian tradition and thereby assume that the homogenization of the structures of knowledge, both Greek and Jewish as well as Iranian, goes as far as gnosticization. Yet we would do better to abandon any such theory and assume instead the existence of a historical paradox, namely that certain forms of dualistic thought (which in its initial stages existed chiefly in Iran) were able to express themselves more easily with the aid of traditions in areas where they intermixed and became less rigid: such traditions were the Hellenism of Babylon, Asia Minor and Egypt; Hellenistic Judaism; and semi-Jewish and western Aramaic baptism.[2] This is preferable to the assumption that they expressed themselves through the medium of a purely Iranian, in particular Zoroastrian, mode of conception, which until the 3rd century A.D. remained far less receptive to the traffic of ideas. Only when dualistic ideas returned to Iran in their new Manichaean form did this situation change. There are reasons for looking for evidence of sustained conflict in the context of which the non-Iranian elements tell us much more about the Iranian elements, and present a more complex picture, than if we simply postulate a straight development of tradition between the Achaemenian and the Sasanian periods.

This evidence is to be found where the poles of the dualisms coincide and can be reached both by generalizing inferences drawn from the stratum common to Manichaeism and Mandaeism and by an

[1] E.g. *Škand-Gumānīk-Vičār* I. 8; 4. 58; 5. 83; 8. 113ff; 9. 18; *Dātistān i Dēnīk* 4. 3; *Dēnkard* IX. 59. 2–6 (tr. West, *Pahlavi Texts* IV, pp. 360–1). *Dēnkard* III. 298 (tr. de Menasce, p. 292); 337ff (tr. de Menasce, p. 313).

[2] *Ginza, right part*, III. 74. 10ff; 77. 15ff; 100–102; Lidzbarski, *Johannesbuch*, 13 (50. 3ff); *Alf Trisar Šuialia* I § 142.

investigation of what this stratum has in common with Western gnosis. The pre-supposition is that the affliction of the individual is seen as absolute and not as something which can be overcome by his own efforts; that this individual is represented by his inner self; and that a righteous man, prophet or apostle, is regarded as necessary in order that his message may make the sufferer aware of the alienation of his inner self within the outward man, and hence of the whole man within the world. It is clear that such feelings and thoughts belonged necessarily to the context of the cosmological-anthropological hypostatizations we have mentioned, which, though variable in details, were being repeatedly conjured up by a concrete and pictorial mode of thinking. This connection made it possible to see the alienation of the inner person within the outward one and within the world, as a hypostatic duality in relation to a higher or cosmic man who was manifest in terms of an identical psychical-spiritual substance shared by both. The fact that expectations were bound up in this frame of reference meant that the righteous man, apostle or prophet, appeared as the representative of the cosmic or heavenly spiritual power or higher man, and to establish a hypostatic unity with him meant a liberation from history (i.e. salvation) for the inner man or the soul within the body of the sufferer; the summons of the righteous man, touching the soul of the sufferer, makes possible the unity whose attainment is at the same time an act of cognition. Thus structures of knowledge and cognition, systems of hypostatization, a specific prophetology and dualisms which were conceived with a view to their abolishment – all these have become linked together and transformed into gnosis.

It may have been the relative dualism of a non-gnostic Iranian system, developed by Magians,[1] which became absolutely dualistic in the manner just sketched, in Lower Egypt, in areas on the fringe of Palestinian-Syrian culture, and as far afield as Asia Minor, particularly Phrygia, and northern Mesopotamia, especially the region around Ḥarrān and Adiabene. This could have offered the essential mythographic points of crystallization to create, together with its antithesis, a gnostic synthesis to serve as the essential pre-supposition for both the Manichaean system in its final form and the Zoroastrian system.

It would seem that the Iranian concept of the soul's heavenly journey

[1] Hippolytus, *Refutatio* I. 2. 14; Diogenes Laertius I. 8ff; Plutarch, *Moralia* V. 370 A–C; Clemens Alex., *Protrepticus* V. 65. 1–4; Porphyrius, *De abstinentia* IV. 16 (tr. Taylor, pp. 166–7); Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones* 125 (vol. I, p. 322).

contributed material for either type of redemption. It is not the specifically Iranian variant of an ancient doctrine of souls, in which such an emphasis on the ascension of the soul is lacking. Instead, it appears to represent a last offshoot of an archaic, probably Upper Palaeolithic, technique for inducing states of ecstasy. There were other comparable offshoots within the area of the present discussion; among them, the Greek ones were developed to an equally significant degree, while those of the Egyptians and Jews appear to be of a different origin, since they have no recognizable Shamanistic-ecstatic background. Ecstatic phenomena are widely known in gnosis too, and outside the field of gnosis we could point to Apollonius of Tyana and Alexander of Abonuteichos, the worshippers of Isis and the Galli of Cybele, as well as to the connection in Montanism between early Christian pneumatology and Phrygian mania. Trances and orgiastic experiences gave to the self-discoveries and the soul-doctrines of certain gnostics a natural affinity with the Greek and Iranian versions of the heavenly journey. There are two reasons for supposing this more readily in relation to Iranian tradition. In Iran, phenomena of this kind appear to have survived longer than in Greece and in Greek Hellenism, as can be seen by comparing the ecstasy of Artā Vīrāz, undertaken in order to ascertain the further obligations which the heavenly truth imposes upon the Zoroastrian community, with the enthusiasm of certain neo-Platonists, which is rather to be classed as an illumination. Furthermore, these Iranian ecstasies have not shared the theoretical and speculative interest of Middle and neo-Platonic illuminations in the nature, extent, and power of the cosmic dimensions. Nor were the ecstatic gnostics presumably interested in cosmology and when they were, they came close to the Greek theoria, which meant that their gnosis could not be derived from the Iranian Čistay.

But precisely those layers of tradition which stand on the threshold of the impressive development of gnosis in Manichaeism have individualistic and particularistic features as well as ecstatic premises associated with folk-culture. This applies to certain Psalms of Thomas in the eclectic pictorial language of Chaldean-Magian folklore, with their parallels in the Mandaean writings (and Mandaean texts which go even further),[1] and in the "Hymn of the Pearl", displaying the more

[1] Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, p. 218. 10–21 (= Drower, *Prayer book*, no. 129); *Psalm-Book*, p. 213ff (= *Ginza, right part*, III. 117. 12–18); *Psalm-Book*, p. 210. 18–22 (= *Ginza, left part*, II. 61. 5–15); *Psalm-Book*, p. 225. 5–14 (= *Prayer book*, no. 96).

precise and sophisticated terminology – despite its pictorial qualities – of Parthian feudalism.[1] The oldest Psalms of Thomas show the linking of three motifs: the affliction of the individual in the demoniac earthly life, his salvation through the ascension of the soul, and the factor which makes this possible – namely, the sending of a prophet who can be docetized. Later Psalms of Thomas show the fusion of these motifs into a myth; "The Hymn of the Pearl" contains what is probably its earliest interpretation. It is not known who is the person behind the figure of the king's son who (now a mythological personage) fetches forth the pearl (= soul) from Egypt (= dark, demonized world). The fact that the prince could be interpreted, by his inclusion into the Acts of Thomas as well as by modern scholars, as Christ, illustrates in exemplary fashion the fluid transition between gnosis and non-gnosis – both historically, in their shifting relationships, and, in terms of general principle, in the mutual transformability of two quite different types of salvation.

Intermediate phenomena and the ruler cult in Commagene

This transition between gnosis and non-gnosis can be seen in a form that is analysable in the figure of Bardesanes of Edessa (154–222 A.D.). The "Wedding Song of Sophia" and the "Mother-Epicleses"[2] have as many links with a gnosis that emerged from his school[3] as with Manichaeism. Bardesanes' equation of God with Space[4] betrays the presence of a belief in destiny of the sort with which we are familiar from the Magians and which by that time was probably transferred to Zurvan. He escaped from the dilemma of such a belief in an inconsistent manner: on the one hand, by recourse to Stoic doctrines in favour of free will, and on the other, by setting forth a cosmogony in which darkness plays an active rôle and which, with the admixture of divine entities, furnishes the substance of which the cosmos is made. In this particular cosmogony[5] the "word of thought" which the Supreme One sends to the four pure entities to assist them against the darkness points either to the paganizing of a Logos-Christology or to the adoption of some doctrine of salvation which has been developed out of the docetization of another prophet figure.

[1] *Acta Thomae* 108–13 (Bedjan III, 110–5). See Delaunay, p. 11 for a detailed bibliography of the *Acts*.
[2] *Ibid.*, 6ff; 27; 50.
[3] Ephraem, *Contra haereses* LV. 1, 5, 7–10.
[4] Ephraem, *Refutations* I, pp. 133. 1–134. 9.
[5] Bar had beš abba, *Histoire*, pp. 191ff.

Apart from going half way toward gnosis, Bardesanes' writings mirror the culture of the small kingdom of Osroene which formed the central link in a chain of states stretching from Armenia, Pontus, Cappadocia and Commagene in the north and north west, to Adiabene, Hatra and Characene in the south east and south. The culture of this whole area is often termed "Parthian" and the term is sometimes extended to regions even farther west, Palmyra in particular; this is because of the names for places, persons and gods, as well as of the presence of Iranian loan-words (particularly in the Aramaic dialects of these areas) and also because of the art and architecture. But the term cannot be used in religious history except in the chronological sense. There is no consistency in its use elsewhere, for in linguistics "Parthian" is used to delimit the language border with the dialects of south west and north east Iran, whereas in the history of art it distinguishes the new style from the older Greco-Iranian style (transition around 20 B.C.). Parthian language does not relate to Parthian art any more than either relates to the Arsacid empire, and so they cannot offer any points of reference from which the religion of the period could be determined as Parthian in content. Even if it could, the Iranian contribution to that content would remain dubious for the same reason. Therefore, even for those phenomena susceptible to a religious interpretation which lie outside apocalyptic thought and gnosis, the most impressive one being the ruler cult in Commagene, we can do no more than distinguish what is Iranian (not Parthian) from what is Greek and Semitic.

When Commagene first saw the light of history in the 3rd century B.C., its dynasty, probably with every justification, claimed descent from a Bactrian family and from the house of the Achaemenians. This *nobilitatis auctoritas* continued to be obligatory for satraps who seized power from 170 B.C. onwards, until Mithridates I Callinicus married Laodice, a daughter of Antiochus VIII Grypus, thus establishing a link with the Seleucid dynasty whose power had already been broken by the Parthians. The offspring of this marriage, Antiochus I, became the most notable king of Commagene, and consecutively acquired the titles of Theos Dikaios Epiphanes Philoromaios Philhellen. The splendid mausoleums which he erected during his reign (*c.* 69–38/31 B.C.), with their inscriptions, reliefs and statues are unique testimonies to the conscious founding of a religion complete with its own cult of ancestors and kings, sacral law-giving and a belief in both Greek and Iranian gods. The ancestor cult, first(?) set up in Arsameia on the Euphrates, was associated with the sanctuary of an otherwise unknown goddess,

Argandene, and was still local in character.[1] Antiochus superseded this in Arsameia on the Nymphaios, where he added the cult of himself to that of his father.[2] Later, on the Nimrūd Dāgh he founded the cult of the Great Gods Zeus–Oromasdes, Apollo–Mithra–Helios–Hermes, Hercules–Artagnes–Ares, together with that of the all-providing national goddess Commagene and his own cult, tended by "chosen priests with seemly robes after the Persian fashion".[3] Long rows of reliefs on the mountain terraces are dedicated to the ancestors of the king, each of which goes back, both on the paternal and maternal sides, to a common ancestor who was held to be a son of Zeus–Oromasdes – i.e. Darius I, on the one hand, and on the other, Alexander the Great. The exclusion of Hera Teleia from the pentad formed by the three Greco-Persian gods and the two native ones, Commagene and Antiochus – which may have meant the rejection of all other cults still extant – appears to have been because she was not at the same time a planetary deity. On his death, the soul of the king ascends to the throne of Zeus Oromasdes. Dexiosis reliefs, set up all over the country, show how each of the gods offers his hand to the new arrival whose consubstantiality with them is now perfected. But the deification of Antiochus was proclaimed in his lifetime; the exact date, 7 July, 62 B.C., has been calculated from the so-called Lion Horoscope[4] which establishes the astrological connection between the deification of the king and the worship of the gods.

Despite outward appearances which are further reinforced by the style and iconography of the statutes, it is not correct to suppose that Iranian religion established itself as a living force within Greek religion. The equation of Verethraghna with Hercules, which would have been mythologically defensible and is indeed attested for earlier times, loses nearly all its value as evidence through further identification with Ares. The detection of a trace of Mithraism in the equation of Apollo–Helios with Hermes is equally untenable. Only the identification of Zeus with Oromasdes is acceptable, but this indicates an astral force of Chaldean origin which could also be expressed in other ways rather than in the form of a theocrasy that was explained by the priests in monistic terms or experienced by the people as a divine presence. Hence certain expressions in the Nimrūd Dāgh inscription, which at first glance seem to

[1] Jalabert and Mouterde, *Inscriptions* I. 47.
[2] Dörner and Goell, *Arsameia am Nymphaios*, 40–59. 95ff.
[3] Dittenberger, *Or. Graeci Inscriptiones* 383. lines 53–8, 70–6.
[4] Vermasseren, *Corpus inscript. et monum. relig. Mith.*, no. 31.

prove a framework and background belonging to Zurvān religion, ultimately do no more than evoke Zurvanitic conceptions of time. Here they were considered to be necessary, but not yet in the case of the parallel inscriptions at Arsameia on the Nymphaios, for example. The series Apollo–Mithra–Helios–Hermes does not represent the fourfold nature of the Zurvān–Aion, and (according to another interpretation) Zeus–Oromasdes does not designate its divinity. Nor does this latter series express its light, in the same way as Artagnes–Hercules–Ares does not express its strength nor Commagene its wisdom. What we have here is not a tetrad at all but a pentad of which the central figure is Antiochus, and this cannot stand for the universal god; so that probably all that is meant[1] is, firstly, that when the soul beloved of God is despatched to the heavenly throne, the body of the king, which has been happily preserved to a great age, shall rest for ever (εἰς τὸν ἄπειρον αἰῶνα) in the grave; and, further down,[2] that the canon of worship shall be observed by all the generations that everlasting future time (χρόνος ἄπειρος) has designated to succeed each other in this country. The ascension of Antiochus' soul is proclaimed in the standard Iranian fashion for the time after his death, but without the usual resurrection at the end of time, perhaps so as to tone down the non-Iranian anticipation of this event. The Good Fortune (νέα τύχη) of the king[3] was something which one could, or should, think of in terms of a daimon, a fravashī or a x^varnah; in itself it was neither the one nor the other.

We may assume that whenever more of the Iranian substance was preserved the basis was provided by a kind of theology, which again was developed by Magians. The sacrifices to Fire and Water, the cult in the fire temples, the worship of Anāhitā and Mithra must have been more elaborate than in older and strictly ethnic Iranian religion.[4] Apart from this there were borrowings from Zoroastrianism, as is shown for instance by the worship of Omanos–Vohu Manah in Asia Minor[5] and the fragment, part theogony, part cosmogony, part eschatology[6] which Plutarch considered as a parallel to the Osiris myth.[7]

[1] Dittenberger, *Or. Graeci Inscriptiones*, 383. line 43.
[2] Dittenberger, *Or. Graeci Inscriptiones*, 383. lines 112ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, line 63.
[4] Dio Chrysostom XXXVI. 38–60; Strabo XV. 3. 13–17.
[5] Strabo XI. 8. 4; XV. 3. 15.
[6] Plutarch, *Moralia* V. 369 D–370 C.
[7] [See further Ch. 3 on the religion and culture of Commagene.]

Religious data in art

In the first half of the Parthian period we are still dealing with so-called Greco-Iranian art which, in the main centres known so far, namely in Commagene, in Nisā, on the Kūh-i Khwāja, in Khalchayan and Surkh Kotal, is the art of the ruling dynasty. Here the fact that a hierothesion indicates a grave cult, that a statue represents a certain god, that the ground plan of a temple points to his worship, or that a rock relief depicts the investiture of a king – all this is of secondary importance to the actual meaning of the monuments themselves. From their state of preservation we can derive only one, albeit significant, piece of information: the dynasty is shown as being closely connected with the gods, and indeed the kings are themselves represented as gods in an Iranian style which has adopted some of the ancient forms of Achaemenian sculpture. If any conclusion is to be drawn from the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is that the cult of rulers predominated.

For some unknown reason, Parthian art in Palmyra, Assur, Hatra, Dura-Europus, Warka, Tang-i Sarvak and Shāmī presents a different picture. It is one of art in the service of city communes not of dynasties. The chief indication that it had broken even further away than Greco-Roman and Greco-Buddhist art from both the traditions of Greek classicism and those of the Ancient East is the increasing predominance of a frontal presentation of figures in reliefs, painting and sculpture, and even in scenes illustrating a narrative. This may express the presence of a higher reality in the figures so presented, and possibly their transcendental character. Thus an archaic technique was extended beyond its original magical purpose, which was to bring consolation or inspire fear at particular times and in particular places, and was applied to works which would otherwise have simply satisfied the need for recalling and recording the past. From this time on the reverent and courtly visitor to the statue of a god or to a sacral chamber at some Hellenized Iranian royal court was not the only one to come under the spell of a hieratic atmosphere. His experience was to be shared by the middle classes who worshipped in a sanctuary of the commune and even by the man in the street when he looked at the depiction of a banquet scene, a burial ceremony, a warrior or nobleman, a married couple or just a group of contemporaries. Perhaps we are justified in seeing a connection between their active spirituality on the one hand, and on the other, the dynamization of hypostases and the viewing of

historical and everyday events in a soteriological context, both of which phenomena are discernible in apocalyptic thought, in gnosis and in the culture of the Magians. In that case Parthian art would contribute even further to the understanding of a region which is rightly called "l'Iran extérieur", even in the context of religious history.

(*b*) *Non-Zoroastrian religions on Iranian soil: areas under Parthian influence*

Under the Arsacids Hellenistic religion as such was much the same as it was under the Seleucids.[1] But it acquired a different status in that the Dahae from the north east brought with them a fresh influx of ethnic Iranian piety of a pastoral and venatic character in which gods, on the one hand, and ancestors, elements and constellations on the other were seen in interrelationship.[2] In the associated rituals the Dahae tended a sacred flame. Perhaps the ethno-historical configuration – and here it would be relevant also to consider the Saka invasion – even had the effect of accentuating the long since mythicized conflict between Iran and "Turan", thereby re-establishing a framework for that kind of dualism in which historical conflicts are metaphysicized. Azhī Dahāka, the "snake of the Dahae", long familiar as a tyrannical king,[3] perhaps because it was already an old mythologization, may have thus acquired a new vividness. Magian eschatology, outlined above, ultimately had affinities both with this Iranian religion and with Hellenism.

As a result, the religious milieu which emerged offered no obstacles to Zoroastrianism. A revived propensity for ecstatic experience may have made minds more receptive to a restoration of Zoroastrian ideas relating to the heavenly journey, bringing out the latent Zoroastrian pantheon. Therefore, the Zoroastrian burial customs and names of deities of which we know, as well as the hotly-disputed composition of an Arsacid Avesta, cannot have been the scattered remnants of a shattered world, but will have belonged in a context which is as yet unclear.

The cult of Anāhitā, which acquired increasing importance within the old Achaemenian triad of Ahura Mazda–Mithra–Anahita, fits in with all the overlapping tendencies, with the exception of the eschatological one. It ties up with: 1. the legitimization of the sovereign, in that

[1] [Cf. the evidence of the Parthian coins, Ch. 8 (*a*).]
[2] Dio Cassius LXIII. 1–7; Tacitus, *Annals* VI. 37; Josephus, *Antiquities* XVIII. 328–48.
[3] Yasht 5. 29f; 15. 19.

Anāhitā carried out the investiture (the Sasanians were to develop this idea further);[1] 2. her general Hellenistic aspect – in Syrian Philadelphia games were dedicated to her, and in Lydia and Cappadocia (from where the *taurobolia* are supposed to have spread to the West) she it was who was behind the figure of Artemis Tauropolos; 3. her ethnic Iranian aspect, because she was a personified symbol of flowing water and, through the x^varnah granted in the investiture, she could also be connected with fire (at the beginning of the Sasanian period the temple in Bīshāpūr was perhaps dedicated to Anāhitā); 4. her cultural Iranian aspect, for she could be related mythologically to other gods (as the daughter of Mazdā, for example, who prospered the land with water); 5. her national Iranian aspect, as she legitimated the enthronement of the king, providing him with charisma (and for this reason, perhaps, she was worshipped, together with other gods, by the *Frataräka in Stakhr); and finally, 6. the Zoroastrian interpretation, for as Zoroastrian goddess she contained all these other aspects, with the exception of the general Hellenistic ones (and for this reason, in the final redaction of Yasht 5 Anāhitā was thought of as being an original part of Zoroastrianism).[2]

By using Anahita as a point of reference, it ought to be possible to locate geographically, at least with some degree of accuracy, the tendencies that crystallized around her. In particular, the great Magian centre in the old sanctuary of Shīz comes to mind, though no evidence has yet been found to prove a pre-Sasanian occupation of this site, but also the places we have already named. But as with the temples in Kangāvar and Khurkha all this remains uncertain and very rarely can the wide range of alternatives be narrowed down by a single fact such as the discovery of the statues of Hercules–Verethraghna in the excavations of temples at Nisā and Susa, which could mean that he was worshipped principally there.

Bactria

The picture presented by Bactria is far less complex, although the vicissitudes of history took a greater toll there. Hellenism makes its appearance there in a purer form than in almost any western region, both under the Diodotids (since 250 B.C.) and the Euthydemids who

[1] Narseh relief in Naqsh-i Rustam, Pērōz relief in Ṭāq-i Bustān.
[2] See Pauly s.v. Anaitis (I. 2030–1 and Suppl. I. 76).

succeeded them some fifty years later.[1] The coins of Diodotus I already depict Zeus with the aegis and the king himself has the title Soter, probably because he was able to spare his kingdom the fate that befell the small neighbouring state ruled by Andragoras at the hands of Arsaces and the Parthians at about the same time. Euthydemus cursed Diodotus II, whom he had ousted, on the grounds that he had betrayed Hellenism, so the intention clearly was to preserve it as a living entity. After his death Euthydemus seems to have been elevated to the status of god, while his son Antimachus used this title on coins while he was still alive – a thing which no western ruler dared do before Antiochus IV. The supreme god of the twin town Alexandria–Kapisa, the elephant from Mount Pilusara, became Graecized as Zeus. Among the sculptures in the palace of Khalchayan, whose primary purpose was to glorify the ruling dynasty, are some representing Nike and Athene. Greek gods are also to be found in the wall paintings of Kūh-i Khwāja. Iranian factors are connected with all this to a much lesser extent. Anahita held her ground only (though inevitably) on the Oxus (which she probably personified anyway) and in its catchment area; her most famous cult image there stood in the temple at Bactra (Balkh). Here, moreover, was the second or third focal point where it can best be proved that Zoroastrianism lived on, the other two being Stakhr and possibly Rhagae; but it is probable that Zoroastrianism lived on everywhere else in Iranian village communities.

Religion in the Kushān empire

The history of the vast feudal state named after the Kushāns, which stretched from the Indo-Parthian Saka satrapies all the way to the Indus, with its power concentrated around the Hindu Kush, still belongs in terms of religious and cultural history to that epoch which in Iran itself came to an end with the advent of the Sasanians, whereas the Kushāns themselves outlived the beginning of Sasanian rule by more than a hundred years.[2] After Vāsudeva I (291–328 A.D.) the empire split up into an eastern part under Kanishka II (from 328 A.D.) and other kings, and a north western part under Vāsudeva II (328–356 A.D.). The former is swallowed up in the history of northern India which, at that period, is still very obscure to us, while the latter was conquered in 356 A.D. by

[1] See p. 187ff.

[2] [Some scholars place the Kushān kings at much earlier dates; see pp. 200ff for a discussion of the subject.]

Shāpūr II. In the Kushān period the old Greco-Bactrian region and its neighbours saw a variety of development in their religious history which outstrips even that of the Parthian empire.[1]

The titles of Vima Kadphises II (165–230 A.D.), who was probably able to extend his dominion as far as the area around Benares and thus into the native soil of Buddhism, are significant indications of this: in Bactrian he was called "King of Kings", in Indian "Great King", and in Chinese "Son of Heaven". To these titles Kanishka I (231–271 A.D.), whose rule marked the heyday of the empire, added that of Emperor, thereby implying a sense of mission vis-à-vis the west. These various titles show that the Kushāns were ruling over a state with many different tribes and religions. Some of these religions were composite and complex (Hellenism, Hinduism), while others were "pure" religions in that they were the religions of distinct cultural groups (non-Zoroastrian Mithraism, early Buddhism). However, we must bear in mind here that all historical phenomena are only relative.

The path for the fusion and co-existence of religions had been prepared in the Kushān empire as far back as those rulers who broke, or usurped, the power of the Euthydemids, in particular in Bactria, under the dynasty of the Eucratidids (from 170 B.C.), and also in India from the time of Menander (*c.* 155–130 B.C.). For instance, coinage with Poseidon, Artemis or the Dioscuri became less frequent, while, on the other hand, Pallas Athene appears on Menander's coins with aegis and thunderbolt and the inscription – which is still in Greek and encircles the portrait of the king – in Kharoshti (with *trādatasa* for σωτῆρος). Likewise Zeus appears around 120 B.C. on coins of Archebios of Bactria with thunderbolt and sceptre (with *dhramikasa jayadharasa* for δικαίου νικεφόρου). The report in the *Milinda Panha* ("Questions of King Menander"),[2] according to which the Greek king with a suite of 500 Ionians questioned the Buddhist sage Nagasena about *nirvana*, the status of the *arahant*, the non-existence or existence of the soul, the reincarnation of the soul, the doctrine of *karma* and other weighty matters, must also be mentioned. This report is most likely based on historical fact – possibly even the king's conversion to Hīnayāna Buddhism.

In the Kushān empire this multiplicity of elements from different religions becomes more concentrated, more complex. Even its Hellenism can only be appreciated if we distinguish its religious content from its creative stylistic power, manifest even in its iconography. To the

[1] See pp. 204ff. [2] See bibliography under Buddhist Pali sources.

former belong Greek gods in Greek temples, Kushān coins with Helios and Hercules once more, and even the Egyptian Sarapis and the Babylonian Nana; also the visit to Taxila of the prophet and Magian, Apollonius of Tyana (1st century A.D.), who must have felt very much at home there when he saw the Greek temple, and who explained something of his philosophy, in Greek, to the king and the brahmans.[1] To the latter belong the portrayal of Buddha with the broadened head of Apollo and numerous borrowings from him in the treatment of robes and hair, thus marking the transition – dating in all probability from the 1st century A.D. – from the dynastic art of the Kushān monarchs to so-called Gandhara art. Without the basic Hellenistic and Iranian attitudes to the portrayal of divine figures the Kushāns would very likely not have ventured to depict Buddha himself. The fact that they did and the style they adopted duly had an effect on the character of their worship. It became imbued with emotion and able to capture the imagination of larger masses of people outside the monastic communities of the Hīnayāna, the "Little Vehicle". This was one reason which, together with the decisive inner development of Buddhist dogma, led to the rise of the Mahāyāna, the "Great Vehicle", from the end of the 1st century B.C., precisely in the Kushān period. The unification of the empire favoured its development and propagation, and by the 1st century A.D. it had spread from Kashmir and Gandhara, in part via eastern Iran, to the Tarim basin and China, leaving everywhere a rich legacy of literature and, in particular, art. Kanishka I then became the patron, and perhaps even the chairman, of the council of Kundalavana in Kashmir. This proved especially beneficial to the school of the Sarvāstivādin which was able to formulate doctrine and gain acceptance for Sanskrit as opposed to Pali. None the less, we cannot declare with any certainty that Kanishka himself was a devotee of the one favoured religion, any more than we can in the case of Constantine at Nicaea. Yet even the Iranian part of the empire contains ruins of Buddhist monasteries and stupas. The biggest, thirteen storeys high, was built by Kanishka near his capital city of Purushapura. On a branch of the old silk route near Bāmiyān the famous colossal statues of Buddha and the caves of Buddhist monks were hewn out of a huge rock face. The city of Khotan, which had been colonized by the Sakas, became a significant Buddhist centre under Kanishka after missionary work had begun there around the middle of the 1st century B.C. The language of the

[1] Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* II. 20–30.

Sakas now came to rival Sogdian in importance as a Buddhist literary language for both original works and works translated from Sanskrit.[1]

There was no national religion in the Kushān empire, and what the religion practised by the ruling dynasty itself was is a question which is not easy to answer. The tolerance and occasional encouragement of Buddhism, easily explicable on political grounds, and the process of Hinduization already noticeable before the foundation of the Kushān empire, are both factors that can be disregarded. The effect of this Hinduization was to win acceptance in varying measure for certain gods from the Vishnuitic and Shivaitic pantheon until the latter eventually came to predominate towards the end of the joint empire, above all in areas not conquered by the Sasanians. Thus on coins, particularly those of Vima Kadphises and Vasudeva I, we find the images of Shiva and of Skanda Kumara who belonged to Shiva's circle. The name of the last-named king shows him to have been a worshipper of Krishna–Vishnu.

It is not possible to detect Iranian religion either inside or outside the dynastic house, and the interpretation of the most important Kanishka inscription, that at Surkh Kotal,[2] is for several reasons still too uncertain. The Iranian names of gods on the Kushān coins are only identifiable in part, and even where they can be identified there are no indications as to whether they belong inside Zoroastrianism or outside it. It is also extremely difficult to discern an Iranian religious content in words borrowed from Sogdian or the Saka language in a Buddhist, Christian or Manichaean context. Nor does the sanctuary of Surkh Kotal offer any clues as to the rites practised there; but they could have belonged to a non-Zoroastrian Mithraism.

This last hypothesis is supported by inferences which may be drawn from the development of Hinduism and, in particular, from the appearance of Indian sun-worship. Once again we find that a group of Magians are concerned. These appear to have come to India with the Saka invasions in the middle of the 1st century B.C. and were priests, but not Zoroastrians, despite the fact that they wore the holy girdle Avyanga and prepared the intoxicating holy drink haoma. Associated with their god Mit(h)ra – as we learn from their Indian equivalents – were Ashi, Čista, Rashnu and Sraosha. In the sun temple at Mitravana on the Čandrabhagha a wooden statue depicts Mit(h)ra as the "man from the North", an Iranian, with the high boots of the Kushān kings. His wor-

[1] See bibliography under Buddhist Sogdian and Saka sources.
[2] See bibliography under Inscriptions, coins and monuments.

shippers hoped for paradise (Sūryaloka), which made this religion more readily acceptable to the worshippers of Vishnu who in turn looked forward to a blissful life in Vaikuntha. Not only does *MIIRO* appear on coins,[1] with Ahura Mazdā or alone and depicted with an aureole, that is, as a sun god proper, but he is invoked at the end of the Kanishka inscription, so that his position must indeed have been a central one. The conspicuously eschatological significance attributed to his acts also has its parallels in the Mithraic mysteries, and can at present only be explained with reference to their later developments. The possibility of a dual interpretation of the gods as either Zoroastrian or non-Zoroastrian is as open to modern scholars as, it would appear, to worshippers in the times of which we are speaking; it may even have been embodied in the actual rites of worship. As for the temple of Jandial near Taxila, in use from the 1st century B.C. onwards, the dispute as to whether it was a Zoroastrian or non-Zoroastrian fire-temple (notwithstanding its Greek ground-plan and Greek columns) will in all probability be resolved when it is realized that both groups used it; that they were able to do so was because here their dogmatic myths (unfortunately lost) did not permit of any conflict. The same is true of the acropolis of Surkh Kotal, which has been compared, on the Zoroastrian side, with the Achaemenian sanctuary near Susa, and on the non-Zoroastrian side with the other important Kanishka sanctuary at Mathura in the plain of the Ganges.

Peoples outside Iran

The great tribal migrations from the Central Asian steppe often appear to have been due as much to religious motives as to economic necessity, for they seem to have been directed towards places known for their significance in some mythological cosmology. This religious motive does not, of course, apply where a tribe was either driven from its dwelling place or attracted by the material resources of, for example, the Greco-Bactrian empire. And yet even then ritually based social organization played its part, for it was its system of age groups which gave these tribes the necessary political and military impetus. Just as the beginning of the Parthian period would have been inconceivable without the Parni, who were not a separate tribe but the young men of the Dahae,[2] so the momentous movements of the Yüeh-chih and the Sakas

[1] Vermasseren, *Corpus*, nos 3, 5, 6.
[2] To be inferred from Justinus XLI. i. 10, and Strabo XI. 9. 2.

must have been due to the presence of similar groups in their society. Further, as the latter long held sway from Central Asia as well as from east Iran and north west India, it is tempting to adopt the theory that the cult-based mercenary activities of earlier times were still a driving force. The wandering groups need not necessarily have taken with them the entire Shamanistic philosophy with its ecstatic methods and its association of certain animals with certain tribes and certain layers of the cosmos, and together with this a certain animal style in their art, with its tattooings, the practice of perforating skulls, and complicated burial rites involving the construction of shafts or kurgans. Besides, it was inevitable that such elements would have given way to the more vigorous culture of the Greco-Bactrians which survived their political defeat.

But in order to avoid the error of thinking that the picture thus presented is the whole picture we must ask ourselves whether perhaps the religion of the steppe-dwellers had not in fact survived among those tribes who already belonged to Iranian history in the stricter sense, but whose destiny lay with movements other than those we have so far considered. First of all there are the Alans,[1] who appeared as a tribal unit outside the Parthian empire in the 3rd century A.D. and who, two centuries later, were driven west by the Huns. Only after further research into the folklore of their Caucasian successors, the Ossetes,[2] has been linked with a serious study of Indo-European language and culture and with a reliable interpretation of the classical account of the Scythians,[3] can we reasonably hope to gain new insight into such things as their theory of monarchy, forms of worship, gods, and cycles of myths. Secondly, there are the empires of Khwarazm to the south of the Aral Sea and Ta-yuan in present day Farghāna, dating from the 1st century B.C. until the end of the Parthian period. The fire cult which we know to have existed there appears to be the continuation of a tradition going back to the dawn of Iranian history, and in the dualistic religion of these areas we seem to see reflected a repetition of conditions similar to those brought about by Zoroaster. It would naturally be tempting to interpret a third region, the country of the Sogdians, in a similar way. But the independence of this people as a vehicle for an ethnic Iranian tradition is in inverse proportion to the importance which its language

[1] Josephus, *Antiquities* XVIII. 97; *War* VII. 244–51; Ammianus Marcellinus XXXI. 2. 1–25; Scriptores Historiae Augustae, *Three Gordians* XXXIV. 4.

[2] E.g. Dumézil, *Légendes sur les Nartes*.

[3] Herodotus IV. 5–82.

acquired as the medium of non-Iranian or semi-Iranian religions, serving the needs of Buddhists, Nestorians[1] and Manichaeans[2] on their way to China along the silk routes.

(c) *New developments: the Iranian contribution to the rise of the Mithraic Mysteries*

The rise of a Mithraic theology presents a problem not only in the light of the Zoroastrianization of Mithra worship but also in the light of the conversion of the Mithra cult into mysteries. These took shape at the opposite end of Iran – not on the frontier between Iran and India but on the frontier between Iran and Asia Minor – at the beginning of the Kushān empire, i.e. during the 1st centuries B.C. and A.D., long before their adoption by the Roman army round about 140 A.D. (according to inscriptions). The connections between the Magian groups who fostered the development and their Eastern brethren have not yet been discovered. But they must have existed, seeing that a central topos of Mithraic mythology can be directly linked with an Indian one, and this link stands completely outside Zoroastrianism. It can be described as follows.

In Vedic and early Sanskrit records the deified *soma*, like the rain, is both the seed of the heavenly bull who makes fertile the earth and the milk of the heavenly cow who nourishes the universe.[3] He comes from the moon,[4] and there he returns after he has passed through plants, animals and humans. The moon fills up like a bowl which the gods drain each month to preserve their immortality.[5] Human beings may also acquire immortality after their death by drinking soma.[6] The crushing of the soma plant's stem to make the sacrificial potion[7] offers the model for the killing of the god Soma by other gods.[8] Mitra also takes part in the killing[9] which likewise is the meaning (still recognizable in the epic version)[10] of the narrative of the killing of Vṛtra, who is equated with the moon and through the moon with Soma,[11] whose white colours are

[1] See bibliography under Sogdian Christian sources.
[2] Henning, "A Sogdian fragment", "Sogdian tales".
[3] *Rig-Veda*, I. 19. 1–23; IX. 71. 3, 74. 3, 97. 31.
[4] *Ibid.*, x. 85. 2–5.
[5] *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, II. 4. 4. 2–15.
[6] *Ibid.*, IX. 4. 4. 8ff; cf. *Rig-Veda*, III. 62. 15; VII. 54. 2; VIII. 48. 4–11.
[7] *Rig-Veda* I. 28. 1–9, etc.
[8] *Taittirīya Sanhitā*, VI. 4. 7. 1; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IV. 1. 3. 2–19.
[9] *Taittirīya Sanhitā*, VI. 4. 8. 1ff; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IV. 1. 4. 8–10.
[10] *Mahābhārata*, 10098–10142 ("Santi parva", section 282. tr. Vol. IX, pp. 334–8).
[11] *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, III. 9. 4. 2; IV. 2. 5. 15.

that of the bull. There is no difficulty, then, in supposing that the archetypal sacrifice – which ethnologists interpret as the origin of the planting of crops, which subsequently acquires a cosmic significance – is focused around the slaying of a bull. This act occupies the central place in the Mithraic mysteries.

Here Mithras is born from a rock, which is a symbol of the sky from which the god of light goes forth. That he actually is the sun is shown by the additional portrayal of Helios on the reliefs, usually to the left of his human form. The ears of corn growing out of the blood and the tail of the bull show that the death of the animal gives life for the future crops. But because the growing of plants has since been understood as a part of the whole, namely the cosmos, the sacrificing of the bull also gives birth to the heavens, which are represented by the circle of the zodiac. Its microcosmic analogy is the circle in which Mithras sacrificed the bull. It is repeated in every Mithraeum where followers of the god assemble. Here we encounter yet another of the discrepancies which divide "l'Iran extérieur" as a spiritual entity from "l'Iran intérieur". So far not a single Mithraeum has been documented on Persian soil, and in all probability none will ever be found. This is evidence for the fact that the inclusion of Asia Minor – which preserved an indigenous Phrygian tradition of portraying the fate of a god as identical with that of his follower – into the sphere of Greek forms of worship was the essential prerequisite for the change of Mit(h)ra worship into Mithraic mysteries.

It is only in Greece and Asia Minor that we find this particular form of esoteric worship with initiation, degrees of consecration and the ultimate goal of rebirth, in whatever sense this is to be understood. In addition to these ritual peculiarities there is a further factor that points to the West, although here the Greek element is somewhat dubious, and that is the doctrine of the creation of the world in Plato's *Timaeus*[1] and the further interpretations of the whole dialogue in Platonic schools of the late classical period. Here there are the following parallels with the Mithraic mysteries:

1. a god creates the world;[2]
2. the heavenly sphere, the zodiac and the planets above whom stands Chronos, by their revolutions bring about days, months and years;[3]
3. the material of the soul (= life, sperma) is mixed in a pitcher and has

[1] Plato, *Timaeus*, 27 D–42 E.
[2] Porphyrius, *De antro Nympharum*, 6.
[3] Vermaseren, *Corpus*, nos 543, 545.

to withstand the onslaughts of the elements (= evil creatures, scorpion);[1]

4. man fights his evil passions (= the Ahrimanic creation) within himself, and thus runs through the sphere of the planets with his soul;[2]
5. ideas, as in the cave parable,[3] can best be seen when men in their dark cave (= the world) are freed from their bonds and drawn up to the light of the sun, and in the Mithraea (= the images of the cosmos) rituals of binding and loosing were practised;[4] Mithras himself mounts up to Helios like his follower who has attained the penultimate degree of initiation, "sun-runner" (heliodromos).[5]

Thus we cannot escape the conclusion that the Mithraic mysteries of Roman Imperial times were developed by one or several men who were just as familiar with Platonic traditions (especially through the Timaeus) and Greek mysteries as they were with the Indo-Iranian Mit(h)ra mythology and Zoroastrian dualism, and who interpreted the one with reference to the other. The achievement which this founding of a religion represents is fully comparable with that of Mani and his first apostles, even if it is earlier.

The Mit(h)ra mythology underwent hardly any metamorphosis, as has just been shown. But behind the intensification of the ability to accomplish good through seven mystic degrees there lies the Iranian antagonism between Good and Evil. The killing of the bull corresponds to the taurobolium in the mysteries of the Magna Mater. But the taurobolium, in all probability, originally belonged to neither of these but to Anāhitā and thus to an ethnic Iranian religion in which the blood of the bull, according to the laws of contagious magic, was simply a way of acquiring its strength and not yet, as in both types of mystery, a means of renewing the human soul. The Mithraic Chronos–Aion, enlaced by a serpent and with a lion's head with gaping jaws symbolizing all-consuming Time, is an interpretation of time as it was experienced in Iran, probably in Zurvanism where Zurvān, as unavoidable destiny who left men no chance of escape, converged with Ahriman who brought evil upon them. It can be assumed that the way of escape provided by Mithra led not only upwards but also forwards, i.e. that the struggle between good and evil was not to be continued until all eternity. However, there is no clear evidence on this but just an

[1] *Ibid.* no. 1727.
[2] Origen, *Contra Celsum* VI. 22.
[3] Plato, *Republic* VII. 514 A–517 A.
[4] Gregory Nazianzen, *Orationes* IV. 70; *Pseudo-Augustini quaestiones* CXIV. 11.
[5] Hieronymus, *Epistulae* CVII. 2.

extrapolation from Hellenistic[1] and Zoroastrian[2] texts. So it is conjectural that there was an eschatology according to which the believers would with the aid of a potion of immortality, survive a universal fire which Mithra would kindle from the sky. In particular, the initial and the final killing of the bull could be a typology between the beginning and end of the world. This could be regarded as intrinsically Mithraic, since it differs from the Zoroastrian eschatology which grew out of the need to continue and perfect Zoroaster's revelation by means of the three saoshyants. But Mithra may nevertheless have been assimilated secondarily with the last saoshyant, so that he became even more of a saviour figure.

This brings us to the question of why the one religion established itself outside Iran and the other inside Iran. A few sociological reasons may be tentatively mentioned, although they need to be examined in greater detail. The fallacy, pardonable because only recently dispelled, that something like the Pax Romana had to be imposed by force, meant that the activity of the soldiers in particular appeared as a struggle for good. In the Imperium Romanum, since the time of Tiberius the army had been the real force that upheld the state, and in the reign of the Soldier Emperors (193–284 A.D.) it consciously saw its rôle in these terms. Consequently the military class more than any other class of the population acquired a community of interest with a succouring deity whose service was an unceasing crusade for good. In Iran, on the other hand, this struggle was not delegated so exclusively to one particular group: it was not a matter of one group fighting on behalf of the rest, but of every man fighting for himself and his fellow men. This was not the kind of background for producing esoteric groups in which the Mithra cult would necessarily have become an occult society of warriors fighting for God.

Iran's rôle in the launching of Manichaeism

Too little attention is paid to the fact that one can understand non-Zoroastrian Mithraism as a system to which Manichaeism can be compared. Even outwardly there is a whole series of relations between the

[1] Dio Chrysostom XXXVI. 48, where Mithras is supposed to be behind Phaethon, who causes a conflagration.

[2] *Greater Bundahišn*, 34, 22f, where the killing of the bull which appears at the end of this world's time, the mixing of the drink from its fat and consecrated haoma etc. is probably common to both Zoroastrianism and Mithraism.

two religions. In the 4th century Manichaeism in the Imperium Romanum took up the legacy of the Mithraic mysteries in every respect, for, in contrast to the latter, it could be interpreted as true Christianity, and did not compel anyone to opt out of society as a mystic. Many Mithraic elements – a particular form of astrology, for example – were thus able to survive. In the Persian empire, Manichaeism could be understood as an indigenous religion on account of such features found in the Mithraic mysteries as the fact that Mithra came into the system either as a demiurge or as a sun god, and the existentially important mythologoumenon of the filling of the moon each month with the substance of life. In the light of this, the tradition, legendary in its details, that the fathers of Manichaeism in Iran were in communication with the priests of Mithra(s)[1] acquires a certain hard core of historical truth. If there was an Iranian factor in the dualization of soul–spirit and self–primeval man, who was both the redeemed and the redeemer, it must have stemmed from the Magian belief in the absolute necessity for seeing human and cosmic existence in terms of dualities which were to be suspended at some point or other in time. But in Iranian thought the resultant poles were in general different from those in the gnostic movement, in that a positive value was set on the life which Ahura Mazdā had created, and the means of overcoming the dualism was not cognition whereby the organ of cognition becomes one with its perceived object.

However, at the time when Mānī (216–76) made his appearance none of this can have been so clear in Iran as it was later to become, Zoroastrianism probably then tending towards a fatalistic scorn for the world and life. Consequently in his only work written in Middle Persian, the *Shāpūragān*, Mānī was able to present Iranian concepts and traditions, including the dualistic ones, in a totally new form, which enabled him to implant the belief that what he was proclaiming was the Zoroastrian religion of the fathers, perhaps modified on Zurvanitic lines. This was basically the same as what he propounded in other works, written in an Aramaic dialect, where he adapted his doctrine to syncretistic religions including Syriac Christianity. Within these scriptures, which were intended to become canonical but in fact did not, he elaborated and systematized the gnostic synthesis which we have attempted to describe, thus maintaining also its Iranian component.[2]

[1] Hegemonius, *Acta Archelai*, 63. 3; Epiphanius, *Adversus haereses*, 66. 3. 13ff; Cyrillus, *Catecheses*, 6. 23.

[2] [On the Iranian components of Manichaeism, cf. Ch. 27 (*a*).]

THE SASANIAN PERIOD

The development of Iranian Manichaeism

The preservation of an Iranian frame of doctrine, whose ancient consistency probably appeared initially more striking than its new gnostic subversiveness, must have secured for Mānī the support of the second Sasanian emperor Shāpūr I throughout his reign (242–73). It will have contributed to the comparative success of Mānī's missionary journeys in the eastern part of the empire ("India"), to Tūrān and Makrān, to Mesene and Adiabene, in different regions of Parthia and in the vicinity of Nisibis. But a sudden change of ideas gave Mānī a position vis-à-vis unconsolidated Zoroastrianism which is comparable to that of Marcion vis-à-vis the Christian Church. This change culminated in an impressive restoration of Zoroastrianism under the high priest Kardēr[1] and it ultimately cost Mānī his life in the prison of Gundēshāpūr during the reign of Bahrām I (274–77).[2]

We can best understand the complicated relation between Manichaeism in its various phases and the forms of genuine Iranian religion if we see it, then, as a continuation of that dialectical-historical process which had led to the formation of oriental gnosis. In Mānī's elaboration of the gnostic synthesis, a new thesis was established. This brought the unstable, complex and perhaps competing Zoroastrian–Zurvanitic traditions to an extremely critical oscillation between gnostic and non-gnostic orientation which may be called an antithesis. Its ambiguity was variously resolved in a two-fold synthesis, namely fully Iranian Manichaeism and a totally non-gnostic, even anti-gnostic Zoroastrianism. In the present context we are not concerned with Mānī's original system but with its equivocal antithesis and this latter's absorption into Iranian Manichaeism (which was in part inaugurated by Mānī himself). We still have to be prepared for uncertainties because the individual topoi cannot yet be assigned to the various stages of development, and we shall therefore venture to list the most important topoi together, not in chronological order. For the sake of brevity they are designated by the symbols M and Z – M representing the ideas of Mānī or his religious community[3] and Z for both the pre-restoration Iranian–Zoroastrian–Zurvanitic ideas and the post-restoration Zoroastrian ideas:[4]

[1] See pp. 878ff and 1209ff.
[2] Henning, "Mani's last journey"; Polotsky, *Manich. Homilien*, 42. 11–56. 22.
[3] See bibliography under Iranian Manichaean sources.
[4] See bibliography under Zoroastrian sources.

M: Before the creation of this material world, light–spirit and darkness–matter exist alongside each other and in opposition to one another.
Z: Before the creation of the material world, the world is spiritual (*mēnōg*).

M: The creation of this world presupposes the mingling of light and darkness.
Z: This world comes into being by the transference of *mēnōg* into *gētīg*, which is followed by a mingling as a result of the incursion of Evil into the spiritual and material sphere.

M: The history of the world is ended by separating the mingled parts, and *fraše(a)gird* is an ideogram for the state which is then reached.
Z: The "making suitable" (*fraškard*) of the world comes about by the defeat and expulsion of Evil.

M: As the Supreme God, Zurvān stands before and beyond time, while Ohrmazd, as Primal Man, descends to the depths and is there overcome by Evil, who then starts the process of mingling.
Z: Zurvān or Ohrmazd is the creator who also takes up the struggle with Evil, who first of all vanquishes Gayōmart.

M: The *amesha spentas* are bound in with the darkness as elements of Light.
Z: Through the amesha spentas, as luminous spiritual powers, God and Man act in heaven and on earth.

M: Mithra[1] or the Living Spirit[2] fashions the world from the mingled substance.
Z: Mithra gives light to the world, helps in the fight against Evil, and sits in judgement at the end of the world.

M: Narisah[3] or Mithra[4] sets in motion the process of purifying the light by moving the world and taking the seed of light away from the archons of darkness.
Z: Narisah is the messenger of Ohrmazd who saves Gayōmart's seed when he is killed.

M: Gehmurd and Murdiyānag are the male and female protoplasts.
Z: Gayōmart is the bi-sexual prototype of humanity, Mašyānag is the female protoplast.

M: Vahman and Dēn actively redeem man by liberating his soul, Vahman directly as the redeeming *nous* within man and indirectly by a continual despatching of apostles, and Dēn directly through a posthumous encounter with the freed soul and indirectly as a sanctifying religious community, making it possible for the chosen ones to adopt an ethical conduct.

[1] Middle Persian fragments.
[2] Parthian fragments.
[3] Middle Persian and Parthian fragments.
[4] Parthian and Sogdian fragments.

Z: Through liberation from Evil, man redeems himself by activating his share in Vohu Manah, and by creating his counterpart, the Daēnā, from the sum of his good deeds.

M: From Jesus to Mānī there is a line of prophets running through world history.
Z: The work of Zoroaster will be perfected only at the end of the world by Ušēdar bāmīg or by three Saoshyants.

M: Srōsh assists the soul in its ascension by attracting it like a magnet, escorting it within himself (= the Milky Way).
Z: Sraosha sits in as an assistant judge in the Final Judgement of the soul and helps it on its way by his power of pronouncing it righteous.

M: After the separation of the mingled elements, those who rule are both the "Lord of Paradise" (*Vahištošahryār*) and the "God of the creation of New World" (*Nōgšahrāfuryazd*).
Z: After the "making suitable" or "transfiguration" of the world, Ohrmazd rules for ever.

M: In the catechism, the questions: "Whence do I come, who and where am I, whither do I go?" are answered by instruction in the entire myth, which is regarded as the main component of the redeeming call, the knowledge which the highest part of a man's soul (Vahman in Middle Persian, Manuhmed in Parthian) uses for purposes of redemption until he himself is finally redeemed.
Z: The same questions are answered in terms of the anthropological consequences of the cosmogony and culminate in ethical demands unrelated to a redeemed redeemer.

In its Iranian form the Manichaean system lost the connection with the original determining factors, both with the doctrine of Bardesanes of Edessa and with the baptists, Elkesaites[1] rather than Nazoraeans–Mandaeans, among whom Mānī had grown up. By the 5th century the basic elements of early Manichaean doctrine had mingled with the gnostic aspects of baptism, which seemed to contain, in addition to its own traditions, fragmentary mythologizings from Manichaeism, which by then had developed in a different direction. Thus, around the rites of baptism, ablution, marriage and burial–ascension of souls, have crystallized all those interpretations, speculations and legends which make Mandaeism in its fully developed form such a complex entity.[2] But as such it plays no further part in the religious history of Iran. It remains sectarian and restricted to small communes in the western and south western border districts.

[1] Henrichs and Koenen, *Ein griechischer Mani-Codex*, 74. 23–76. 9; 89. 5–14; 103. 4–19.
[2] See bibliography under Mandaean sources.

Manichaeism, on the other hand, became established as a church. To the eastern regions Mānī's disciple Mar Ammo undertook a missionary journey. The earliest schism, the Dēnāvarīya, in Khurāsān and later in Turkistan, is traced back to him, though historically this is quite incorrect. The Dēnāvarīya appear to have suffered less from persecution than the communities in the other provinces of the Sasanian empire; eventually (before 650) they revoked their allegiance to the Archegos in Babylon. Under the Umayyads, when Manichaeans felt safe to return to Iraq, the Archegos Mihr succeeded in bringing about a reunification (between 705 and 715) out of which came a new split in Mihrīya and Miqlāṣīya.[1] It was probably the latter school which transferred the seat of the supreme head back to the East, when conditions for the Manichaeans in Persia and the Iraq of the ʿAbbāsids became as intolerable as they had been under the Sasanians. From Samarqand the Sogdians then disseminated Manichaeism in Central Asia.[2]

With the re-opening of the trade routes after the Chinese had put to an end the short-lived Tibetan dominion of east Turkestan (670–92), the Sogdians were followed by Persian Manichaeans who were being oppressed by Arabian armies. In this way Manichaeism also reached China (from 692 onwards), both in purely Iranian forms – the western planetary week with eastern Iranian names was probably introduced by a Manichaean scholar – and in a Buddhist restyling which it had undergone in the course of various symbioses between Manichaean and Buddhist monasteries along the silk routes. In China it was tolerated at times, *de facto* (A.D. 694, 719) or *de jure* (A.D. 768, 771), while at others it was systematically persecuted. The missionary work was carried on in the Chinese language, into which hymns, too, were translated or transcribed[3] from the three Middle Iranian dialects. Also, by using the literary form of the Sutra[4] and the representation of Mānī as Buddha,[5] as well as by the highly intellectual juxtaposition (not substitution) of numerous Manichaean and Buddhist ideas, Manichaeism adapted itself largely to the rôle of legitimate successor to Buddhism. But although it followed from Mānī's basic premiss, the belief in the identity of his doctrine even with Buddhism was not accepted in China. By the time Manichaeism, along with other "heresies", was prohibited in the legal

[1] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I, p. 334, l. 19–p. 335, l. 1.

[2] Cf. Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, pp. 190–2 (text 208. 7–209. 10).

[3] Tsui Chi.

[4] Chavannes-Pelliot, "Un traité Manichéen I", 508–90.

[5] Haloun-Henning, "Compendium" with continuation in Chavannes-Pelliot, "Un traité Manichéen II", 105–16.

code of the Ming Emperors at the end of the 14th century,[1] it seems that it had been a spent force already for the past two centuries.

For the rest, the history of Central Asian and Chinese Manichaeism offers the only examples of how the Manichaean movement, like all spiritualistic movements, was not always content to look for the New World in inwardness, in the Beyond or at the End of the World. Occasionally it was felt that the New World should be constructed in this present world, so that missionary preaching would suddenly turn to subversion, revolution and the seizure of power. In the face of convincing refutations by Confucian scholars of the thesis that Manichaeism and Buddhism were identical, the continuing assimilation of the two religions was in itself subversive enough. Even more subversive was the 11th-century attempt to include a "Book of the two Principles" and a "Book of the three Moments" in the compiling of the Taoist canon, but this, too, was a failure.[2] In 920 Manichaeans were involved in a rebellion in the province of Ho-nan which was put down by imperial troops. Perhaps the Manichaeans wanted to repeat the historical success granted their religion on a previous occasion: in 762 the Qaghan of the Uigurs had come into contact with Manichaean scholars after conquering the western Chinese capital of Lo-Yang and had found their religion more suitable for the improving of morals and for instruction about light and (arithmetical?) science than the Buddhism and Shamanism of his subjects; so he was converted, and with him the majority of his subjects. The Chinese Emperor benefited from the new peaceable disposition of his rivals. Through them Manichaeism retained its identity even after this seizure of power. In 840 the Uigurs were thrust from power by the Kirghiz. Two Uigur pocket states in Kansu and the oasis of Turfan afforded Manichaeism a final home until the Mongol conquest in the 13th century. This was of supreme importance for the preservation to the present day of its literary remains, which are written in the old Turkish language.[3]

Apart from these direct traces there are a number of indirect ones which need to be more clearly established. There seem to have been some Manichaean elements in the Lamaist cult in Tibet;[4] the pentads in the dogmatics of the Bön-po could well be an example. We also think of Manichaean speculation in connection with the early systems

[1] *Ibid.*, 364–70 (text 51–3).
[2] *Ibid.*, 325–8, 330–9, 352–62 (text 44, 46, 49).
[3] See bibliography under Turkish Manichaean sources.
[4] bsTan-'byuṅ, fol. 26 a 2ff.

of Vajrayāna Buddhism (7th and 8th centuries),[1] particularly in the doctrine of Ādi-Buddha, who by meditation brings forth the five Tathāgatas. Here Manichaeism has influenced other religions in their substance, but has not provided the stimulus towards their finding and affirming their own identity by a provocative re-interpretation, which is the effect it had on Christianity and Zoroastrianism.

The rôle of the religious heritage of the Seleucid and Parthian periods

Since Zoroastrianism responds to a challenge it is understandable that it fought against those religious tendencies on which it was dependent, in so far as it was in opposition to them. This historical law operated in conjunction with the other which states that the relationship between a hierarchically structured religion, which is what Zoroastrianism had become through the subordination of other gods to Zoroaster's Ahura Mazda, and a hierarchically organized state, which is what the Sasanian empire developed into by a series of economic and social circumstances, must be one of mutual dependence and mutual assistance. So it is understandable that since the time of Kardēr not only Manichaeans were persecuted but also baptists, who were probably not always distinguished from Syrian Christians, Christians proper and Zoroastrian heretics. Their self-awareness continued to draw fresh nourishment from gnosis, though not necessarily in its Manichaean form. Of the last-named the group of Mazdakites under Kavād (488–531) were the most significant. In this instance the desolate state to which the empire had been reduced through the Hephthalite invasion and other circumstances had impelled them to draw "communistic" conclusions from the doctrine of the equality of the divine light in all men. Thus Iran entered upon a tradition of revolution. Perhaps here, as in other spheres, the principle of establishing dogma was not arrived at as such without the essentially Greek propensity for formulating doctrine – so that the derivative character of the long period we have attempted to survey remains intact, without calling into question the specific importance of Iranian piety for world history.

The restoration of Zoroastrianism at the beginning of the Sasanian empire is not only a further development of the religion which had taken shape in the time of the Achaemenian empire out of the prophecies and priesthood associated with Zoroaster and under the

[1] *Sādhanamālā* 56, 187 (CXXIV; 117. 22f; 391. 2).

influence of various factors, some ethnically Iranian, others Babylonian, and some (the least important) Egyptian in origin. The restoration was also a response to challenges such as were represented by the religious movements we have sketched above. Furthermore we find, in the eclecticism of Shāpūr I (241–72), the influence of Indian thought as later we find Byzantine ideas and in the 9th century, long after the decline of the Sasanian empire, those of Islam impinging on Zoroastrianism.

The Sasanian priests and theologians must have seen the greatest danger as lying in the subversive influence represented by the semi-gnostic association that had sprung up between, on the one hand, Manichaeism which was breaking away from Mesopotamian Elkesaitism, and Zurvanism on the other. Their opposition involved two vital aims: first, to insist effectively on the divine character of creation, including animal and vegetable matter, and of political institutions as well; secondly, to stress that the perfection of the world was to be sought not in its ultimate dissolution but in its transfiguration, at the heart of which was Iran, conceived in eschatological terms. The fact that Zoroastrian religion is thus identified with the Iranian social order lends a political dimension to such doctrines.

Hence the material complement to the True Religion is found in the idea of royalty in particular. The royal claim is that the king represents the rule of Ahura Mazdā over the earth. Thus on the relief depicting the investiture of Ardashīr II in Ṭāq-i Bustān, Ahura Mazdā is seen standing beside the king with a defeated enemy, apparently a Roman emperor, lying beneath their feet; while on the reliefs showing the investiture of Ardashīr I at Naqsh-i Rustam and Shāpūr I at Bīshāpūr, none other than Ahriman himself is depicted as an opponent of the king, lying slain beneath a horse whose rider is Ahura Mazdā.

The amalgamation of the ideology of kingship with religion so as to become an authoritarian, hierarchical doctrine of the state in the Sasanian period is most effectively expressed by the Pahlavi word *paimān*: this can denote both the measure of the cosmos and that of the state, both essential religious truth and earthly reason; and it also expresses the conception of modesty, moderation and maturity vis-à-vis God and the king, as well as the covenant between Ahura Mazdā and Ahriman, and virtue poised between competing moral principles. What is implied is that, among the many dualisms which in the classical Iranian view had endangered the acceptance of natural and moral law

in Hellenistic and Parthian times, only the dualism between Good and Evil was regarded as worthy of serious attention. If one starts with the basic assumption that the Good was represented by the Iranian concept of kingship, then one has to see that thereafter it became generalized as the principle of religion; behind this generalization then the whole material basis of which we have spoken disappears entirely. It is with these basic assumptions in mind that we can best approach the questions which are to be considered in detail in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 23

ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION

IRANIAN RELIGION UNDER THE SELEUCIDS AND ARSACIDS

In consequence of Alexander's conquest, Iranian religious manifestations were almost completely submerged under the wave of Hellenism. Only a few facts bear witness to the survival of native religion during the period up to the national renaissance which was adumbrated in the 1st century B.C. and was to be characteristic of the Sasanian dynasty.[1]

A comparison with the artistic development in the same periods is instructive.[2] As shown by Schlumberger,[3] three phases can be distinguished. The first one, represented on the island of Failaka in the Persian Gulf, at Ai Khanum on the Oxus, and elsewhere, is purely Hellenic. The second one, attested on Nimrud Dāgh, at Nisā and, in eastern Iran, at Kūh-i Khwāja, Khalchayan, and Surkh Kotal, offers a blend of Greek and Iranian elements. Only the third one sees a fusion of these heterogeneous elements into the unity of a new style, attested notably at Palmyra and Hatra, but which must have been born in the Parthian capital, Ctẹsiphon, and spread from there to the whole Arsacid empire, where it is notably attested at Tang-i Sarvak and Bard-i Nishānda.

Maybe the religion also yielded at first to the prestige of the Greco-Macedonian conquerors, at least where it had no deep roots. At Susa, for instance, which had been one of the capital cities of the Achaemenians but where the religion of Ahurā Mazdā was not autochthonous, the coinage of the Seleucid and Arsacid periods does not represent a single Iranian deity.[4] Hellenism there makes only one concession to the local religion, and this is to the Elamitic religion, not to that of Aryan Iran; Artemis with the radiate crown – under Mithradates II (123/2 to 92 or 91) and Arsaces Theopator Evergetes (91 or 90 to about 78) – represents Artemis-Nanaia.[5]

[1] [Concerning continuation of the Zoroastrian religion in Parthian times, cf. Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, pp. 78ff. and in this volume p. 795.]

[2] Cf. p. 841, above. Ed.

[3] Pp. 21ff.

[4] Le Rider, pp. 1ff.

[5] On this goddess, see G. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus den syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer* (Leipzig, 1880), pp. 130ff. (*AKM* VII.3).

In a second phase of Iranian history Greek gods and Iranian gods appear to have blended to some extent, as best illustrated in the monuments of Commagene in the middle of the 1st century B.C.: the gods of Antiochus on Nimrud Dāgh (pl. 38) and those of his father at Arsameia of the Nymphaios[1] are named both in Greek and Iranian: Zeus/Oromazdes, Apollon/Mithra/Helios/Hermes, Artagnes/Herakles/Ares.[2]

On Arsacid coins, the eponymous ancestor Arsaces has taken the place, on the omphalos, which Apollo occupied there on Seleucid coins. This happened at Ecbatana under Mithradates I. Later on, under Arsaces Philopator Evergetes, the omphalos is replaced by a throne.[3]

When did the third phase begin, in which the Iranian religion eventually reaffirmed itself? According to the *Dēnkart*[4] "Valakhsh the Arsacid commanded that a memorandum be sent to the provinces (instructing them) to preserve, in the state in which they had been found in (each) province, whatever of the Avesta and Zand had come to light and was genuine, and also any teaching deriving from it which, although now scattered owing to the chaos and disruption which Alexander had brought in his wake and the pillage and looting of the Macedonians in the kingdom of Iran, either survived in writing or was preserved in an authoritative oral tradition".[5] Which Vologeses was concerned? We do not know. The fire-altar is seen on a coin of Vologeses IV, the last but one of the dynasty.[6] But already Vologeses I (51–8) had Parthian (Aramaic) characters engraved on his coins, on which the Greek legend is almost illegible.

On the other hand, the evidence from Nisā in Parthia seems to point to an even earlier date for the official recognition of Zoroastrianism. Religion would then seem, in this case at least, to have developed aside from art, at a different pace. Art at Nisā seems purely Greek; the gods represented on the beautiful ivory rhytons in the Hermitage are the twelve Olympians. The presence of temples (*'yzn*)[7] to Nana is indecisive, for Nana may or may not designate Anāhitā; but two words for "priest"

[1] F. K. Dörner and T. Göll, *Arsameia am Nymphaios* (Berlin, 1963); H. Dörrie, *Der Königskult des Antiochos von Kommagene* (Göttingen, 1964) (*AAWG* 3er f. LX).

[2] See ch. 3 on the subject.

[3] See ch. 8 (*a*) and pp. 683 ff.

[4] P. 412, ll. 3ff.

[5] Translated by Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 8.

[6] Unvala, p. 23. [See pp. 99 and 297 for a new ordering of Vologeses.]

[7] The ancient Iranians had no temples. The first ones were, in all probability, those built under Artaxerxes II to house the statues of Anāhitā. Then, as part of an orthodox reaction, fire-temples were made and henceforward two different kinds of sanctuary existed, the one containing a statue, the other an ever-burning fire. See Boyce, "Iconoclasm".

are attested which are undoubtedly Iranian: *mgwš* "magus" and *'twršpt* "master of the fire".[1] Some names of persons or places, such as *'hwrmzdyk* or *myhrd'tkyrt* are not in themselves specifically Zoroastrian; but others are, namely *'rtwhyštk*, *spndrmtk*, *dynmzdk*, *prnbg*.[2] Moreover, clear evidence is provided by the calendar; whereas the Seleucids, at Susa, used the Macedonian calendar, the Arsacids reverted to the Babylonian computation already adopted by the Achaemenians, who had adapted to it the names of the Old Persian calendar.[3]

Not until the 1st century B.C. do we find, in Nisā, evidence of Zoroastrian names of the months and days.[4] The month-names attested on ostraca are the following: *prwrtyn* (Fravartīn), *'rtywhšt* (Arta vahišta), *hrwtt* (Haurvatāt, also on the third Avroman papyrus, dated 54/55),[5] *xštrywr* (Xšaθra vairya), *'trw* (Ātar), *whmn* (Vohu Manah). The day-names are as follows: *hrwtt*, *hmrtt* (Amərətāt), *dtš* (Daθuš), *'trw*, *'phwny* (< *Apō vaŋuhīš*), *hw'r* (X^w^ar), *m'h* (Māh), *tyry* (Tīr), *gwyrh* (see below), *mtry* (Miθra), *srwš* (Sraoša) and *r'm* (Rāma). *Gwyrh* can be interpreted as Gōš, which implies the existence at that early date of a written Avesta.[6]

These calendar-names seem to coincide with the lists found at Mount Mugh in Sogdiana dating from just before the Muslim conquest,[7] and in the *Bundahišn*, chap. 25, and followed to this day by the Zoroastrians. On one particular point, namely the use of an equivalent of Ohrmazd, *daθuš*, for three days of the month, the coincidence would be especially significant, since as will be shown below this implies a post-Zurvanite theology.[8]

The tower of Nūrābād, in Fārs, may have been built during the last three centuries B.C.,[9] in imitation of those of Naqsh-i Rustam and Pasargadae, which it resembles. It had, according to Ghirshman, stairs leading up to the roof, on which he saw remnants of two fire-altars.

The coins of Persis always had their legends in Pahlavī, and their motifs were not exclusively Greek. In the first period, which runs until about 150 B.C.,[10] the reverse generally shows what had been interpreted

[1] On a tax for the maintenance of fire-temples, see below, p. 904.

[2] Frye, *Heritage*, p. 183. [Cf. p. 694 in this vol.] [3] Le Rider, *Suse*, pp. 41ff.

[4] Leaving aside as too uncertain the *m'hy sndrm(t)* read by Herzfeld, *Altpersische Inschriften* (Berlin, 1938), p. 12 in the Aramaic inscription of Naqsh-i Rustam.

[5] Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 29.

[6] Diakonov and Livshits, "Novie naxodki", p. 155.

[7] Except that Mithra is replaced there by Baga; the complete list is given by Diakonov and Livshits, p. 154, n. 72. [8] See p. 900.

[9] R. Ghirshman, "La tour de Nourabad", *Syria* XXIV (1944–5), pp. 175–93.

[10] G. Hill in *SPA*, p. 402.

as a "temple" of the type just mentioned, until Stronach[1] saw in it "a modified form of an already well-established type of tower-altar". His most interesting argument is that, on some of the coins, we see, as in the Achaemenian reliefs, "the king on the left, standing with his right hand raised and his left hand holding a bow, in an attitude of worship before an altar, upon which we see undoubted stylized flames, and above which floats the unmistakable image of Ahuramazda", thus repeating the essence of the Achaemenian relief as if "to stress the traditional compact between the ruler and his god". Therefore "the object before the king must be an altar and not a fire-temple". Still, the objects on the top of the "tower", in certain coins, do appear to be altars.[2] This might be, as Schippmann suggests,[3] a representation of the Nūrābād tower.

In the second period, *c.* 150–100, the princes of Persis call themselves kings. They have on their heads an eagle, then a crescent. The winged figure hovers above the tower-altar.

In the third period, which lasts until the Christian era, the "tower-altar" is replaced by an altar in the shape of a pillar and a table, a type which was to reappear only under Ardashīr and later, after a remarkable hiatus.

In the fourth period, from the beginning of the Christian era to the advent of the Sasanians, any allusion to the fire-cult disappears. The coins of Persis resemble essentially those of Elymaïs instead of differing from them, as they did during the preceding periods, by Mazdean symbols, the fire-altar and the winged figure. This seems to indicate that the prince who ruled Persis had lost interest in the Iranian religion. With Ardashīr, the future founder of the new dynasty, it was different, and this may suggest that his religious zeal – as an hereditary priest of Stakhr – may have helped him seize power in his native province.

At Persepolis, in the so-called Frātadāra-temple, two twin-reliefs face each other in a passage: a "prince" holds the *barəsman* (bundle of twigs), a "princess" holds what I think, after examining it *in situ*, is a cornucopia. In the context of these sculptures and of the fire-room, it is probable that the divine names read by Herzfeld on an inscription, Zeus megistos, Apollon Helios and Artemis Athene were, as in Commagene, *interpretationes graecae* of Iranian gods. Unfortunately, no trace remains of that inscription.

[1] "The Kūh-i Shahrak Fire Altar", pp. 220ff.
[2] As seen by Ghirshman, *op. cit.* p. 181.
[3] Pp. 156ff.

The same type of fire-temple appears at Kūh-i Khwāja and at Hatra. The gods represented on the walls of Kūh-i Khwāja are in Greek costume, except for one wearing winged headgear, suggesting an incarnation of Verethraghna. It will be remembered that in Commagene this god was represented in his Greek form, as Herakles. The appearance of such a model in Kūh-i Khwāja would suggest that this sanctuary is of later date than the Commagene reliefs: this would accord with the architectural argument adduced by Schlumberger[1] for assigning Kūh-i Khwāja to the late Parthian or even to the beginning of the Sasanian period.

To what extent is the square room in the Hatra temple Iranian? We know from Cassius Dio[2] that the great temple was devoted to the worship of the sun. Inscriptions prove that the square room was the temple of Šamaš, which perhaps is not inconsistent with its shape of a fire-temple, i.e., "of a temple in which the cult addressed itself not to a sacred object or a divine statue, but to the flame of a sacred fire perpetually maintained on an altar", writes Schlumberger,[3] who goes on to say that "we must not conclude that there were never any fire-temples but Zoroastrian ones, or that all the Zoroastrian temples were dedicated to the supreme god of Zoroastrianism, Ohrmazd. At the beginning of the Sasanian period, the famous fire-temple at Stakhr, to cite but one example, was a temple of Anāhitā. There is no doubt that fire-temples were erected to various deities and one can surmise that they were widely spread. Abbé J. Starcky has proposed very plausibly seeing such fire-temples in the mysterious *hammana*, mentioned in several Palmyrenian and Nabatean texts. The square temple at Hatra could therefore be a fire-temple to the sun-god." But if an "Iranian" temple could thus be erected to Šamaš, does this not imply that it was originally a temple to Mithra? This is the conclusion implicitly drawn by many scholars, notably by V. Lukonin who does not hesitate[4] to designate as birds symbolic of Mithra the eagles represented at Hatra, although the eagle can also be the bird of Herakles[5] or be itself worshipped as a god. It must be conceded, however, that eagles appear on a frieze, the centre of which is occupied by the radiate crown of the sun-god.

At Bard-i Nishānda, a relief in Parthian style leaves no doubt as to

[1] P. 60.

[2] Cited by S. Fukai, "The Artifacts of Hatra and Parthian Art", *East and West* XI (Rome, 1960), p. 138.

[3] Pp. 134ff.

[4] *Persia II*, p. 157.

[5] Fu'ād Safar, "Kitābāt al-Ḥaḍr", *Sumer* XXI (1965), p. 37 (inscription 221– and pl.).

the religious purpose of the place. A king or prince is seen sacrificing before a fire-altar. His left hand rests on his sword, as he holds in his right one a receptacle for pouring a libation into the fire. On the other side of the altar, a priest in a robe and trousers different from the king's costume lifts his right arm holding an object which has been hammered out of recognition.

The Herakles statue recently discovered at Masjid-i Sulaimān[1] is of Parthian style, but it represents a purely Greek conception: Herakles smothering the lion of Nemea.

There is no trace of any construction dating to Arsacid times at Takht-i Sulaimān.

There is nothing specifically Iranian in the altars represented on rock-reliefs of Parthian style either at Bīsitūn, with no flames on the altar (pl. 64), or at Tang-i Sarvak, where a king is shown worshipping a betyl (*beth-EL* = house of God) (pl. 73), an action which is not Iranian either.

A god on a chariot is represented in the 3rd century B.C. on the head-gear of a Scythian queen found at Karagodeuashkh, southern Russia,[2] but, as writes Tarn,[3] "it remains to be ascertained whether the original Greek and Iranian conceptions of the quadriga were independent of each other or, if not, how they were related".

At Dura Europos, as at Hatra and Assur, only Greek and Semitic cults are attested. The Mithraeum belongs to the Roman Mysteries brought to Dura by the legions.

Polybius (xv. 17) attributes to Ainē, a corruption of Anāhitā, the temple at Ecbatana which Antiochus III wanted to plunder in 209 B.C. "Most of the precious metals in the city were stripped off in the invasion of Alexander and his Macedonians, and the rest during the reign of Antigonus and Seleucus the son of Nicanor. When Antiochus reached the place, only the temple of Ainē had the columns round it still gilded and a number of silver tiles were piled up in it, while a few gold bricks and a considerable quantity of silver ones remained. From all the objects sufficient metal was melted to coin money with the king's effigy amounting to very nearly 4000 talents."

The temple at Shāmī was perhaps "one of the two sanctuaries pillaged by Mithradates I during the reconquest of Elymaïs".[4]

[1] Ghirshman, "Terrasses sacrées".
[2] M. I. Rostovtseff, *Dura Europos and its art* (Oxford, 1938), p. 63.
[3] W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge, 1938), p. 211.
[4] Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 87.

Several ancient authors describe the Iranian rites performed in Asia Minor. According to Strabo (xv. 3. 15) "they do not sacrifice with a knife, but with a big piece of wood, beating them to death as with a cudgel. There are magnificent *sēkoi*, in the middle of which altars are seen covered with much ash and where the magi maintain an inextinguishable fire. They enter there every day and chant for nearly an hour in front of the fire, holding the bundle of twigs, their head covered with a felt tiara the flaps of which go down on both sides so as to cover their lips. The same ceremonies are also performed in the temples of Anaitis and Omanos, and they carry the statue of Omanos in procession."

According to Diodorus (xvii. 114. 4) "as part of the preparations for the funeral, the king ordered the cities of the region to contribute to its splendour in accordance with their ability, and he proclaimed to all the peoples of Asia that they should sedulously quench what the Persians call the sacred fire, until such time as the funeral should be ended. This was the custom of the Persians when their kings died, and people thought that the order was of ill omen, and that heaven was foretelling the king's own death."

Pausanias (v. xxvii. 5–6), says that "the Lydians, who are surnamed Persians, have sanctuaries in the cities of Hierocaesarea and Hypaepa; in each sanctuary is a chapel, and in the chapel there are ashes on an altar, but the colour of the ashes is not that of ordinary ashes. A magos, after entering the chapel and piling logs on the altar, first places a tiara on his head, and next chants an invocation to some god in a barbarous and, to a Greek, unintelligible tongue: he chants the words from a book. Then without the application of fire the wood kindles and a bright blaze shoots up from it."

In Appian (*De bello Mithridatico*, 66) we read that "the king ordered a sacrifice to be made to Zeus Stratios ("of the armies") according to the ancestral custom. They build a huge pyre on the summit of a high mountain, to which every king carries fuel. Then they build another, smaller one near the first. And onto the large one they pour milk and honey and wine and oil and every kind of aromatic substance; on the small one they offer a banquet to those present. This was the way it was done also at Pasargadae in the solemn royal sacrifices. Then they set fire to the wood and the flames are seen from the sea, distant a thousand stades."

Artabanus (Ardavān) V, the last Arsacid, is represented on a relief at

Susa[1] in A.D. 215, giving the investiture to his satrap Khwasak. The suzerain is seated on a throne with feet in the shape of winged animals, a symbol of the heavenly, divine character of this king. Three other facts show that the Arsacids considered themselves as gods. A beardless king, perhaps Phriapites, calls himself on one coin *theos*; Artabanus II is called *theopatōr*; the Greeks unofficially gave Phraates IV the title of "god almighty".

This conception and usage seems to go back ultimately to Alexander, through his successors. If he did not himself claim to be a god, the episode of the Ammon oasis would alone have sufficed to give credit to the legend of his divinity. Among his successors, Antimachos, son of Euthydemos, calls himself (on his coins) a god, and several Seleucids do the same.[2] Antiochus IV, who considered himself as a new Alexander and the restorer of his empire, adopted in 175 the radiate crown of Helios[3] and in 169 the title of Epiphanes, meaning that he was a manifestation of Zeus.

The Greco-Roman world provides sufficient explanation, without resorting to Iran, of most of the representations in which Ringbom[4] claims to recognize Anāhitā. The Nihāvand statuette seems to be no other than a Tyche; the Susa terracotta showing a woman filling a phial with milk from her breast has more to do with the *scène de genre* than with mythology. Only the one in Berlin[5] might well represent a statue of Anāhitā in an *aedicula*, with a Parthian lord pointing at her.

The Ἀναειτις Βαρζοχαρα mentioned in an inscription discovered at Ortaköy and published in 1967[6] should, as suggested by G. Klingenschmitt,[7] represent Anāhitā, who according to the Avesta (Yasht 5. 21) dwelt in the high (mountain) Harā (*harā bərəzaitī*, whence the name of the Alburz).

Anaitis was especially popular in Lydia, Phrygia (Philadelphia, Hierocaesarea, Hypaepa), Pontus (Zela), and Cappadocia.[8] Strabo (XII. 3. 37) tells us prostitution was practised at Zela in honour of the

[1] *Ibid.* p. 56, fig. 70.

[2] E. Bikerman, *Institutions des Séleucides* (Paris, 1938), pp. 243ff.

[3] Before him, Alexander of Ouranopolis had called himself the sun and put the sun on his coins; cf. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. 92, 210.

[4] L.-I. Ringbom, "Zur Ikonographie der Göttin Ardvi Sura Anahita", *Acta Academiae Aboensis* (Humaniora) XXIII.2 (Abo, 1957), pp. 1–28.

[5] Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 107, fig. 123.

[6] R. P. Harper, "A dedication to the goddess Anaitis at Ortaköy", *Anatolian Studies* XVII (London, 1967), p. 193.

[7] In a conversation with M. Mayrhofer, 1969.

[8] S. Wikander, *Feuerpriester in Kleinasien und Iran* (Lund, 1946), p. 61.

goddess. Was this a feature of the Iranian cult? We cannot absolutely deny it. Wikander (p. 89) suggests that "the polemic directed against the whore in various passages of the Avesta, particularly in the yašt to Anāhitā, was in fact directed against certain current forms of her cult admitting this usage".

Plutarch (*Artaxerxes* II. iii) is referring to another kind of cult when he speaks of the "temple of the martial goddess who can be compared to Athena". "This is an obvious allusion to Anahita", writes M.-L. Chaumont,[1] "but it is not certain if the expression *thea polemikē* referred to the Anāhitā venerated by Artaxerxes III, or to what she had become in Plutarch's time." Anyway, Plutarch's passage makes it clear that the militant character of this goddess, to whom the Sasanians were to consecrate the heads of their defeated enemies, goes back at least to the 1st century A.D. And we can perhaps go still further back, thanks to Herodotus who says that Xerxes, before going to war, sacrificed to the "Trojan Athena".

RELIGION AND POLITICS UNDER THE SASANIANS

Pāpak was a high-priest of Anāhitā at Stakhr. With his son Ardashīr, founder of the Sasanian dynasty, religion ascends the throne of Iran. The whole history of the Sasanians can be envisaged in terms of the relation between the temporal and the spiritual powers, which now support, now oppose one another. Pāpak's prestige as a priest perhaps helped him to conquer the throne of Stakhr, which was occupied by Gōčihr the Bāzrangid, one of those rulers of Persis who showed, as we saw above, no interest in the fire-cult.[2] On a graffito at Persepolis,[3] Pāpak is represented with his son Shāpūr (who became king in 209): each wears the same headgear as on the coins of Shāpūr I.[4] Pāpak is pictured in his double dignity of king-priest: with one hand he holds the hilt of a sword, while with the other he pokes or feeds the fire of an altar. Shāpūr, on horseback, also holds with one hand the hilt of his sword; with the other, he receives the ribboned ring, the royal emblem. His tiara, adorned with stars and a moon-crescent, signifies his heavenly, divine character. The same tiara was worn by Artabanus V on the Susa relief. Lukonin[5] sees here (with some hesitation) a proof that at this

[1] Chaumont, "Le culte d'Anahita", p. 161.

[2] Chaumont, "Papak, roi de Staxr", p. 176.

[3] One half of which is reproduced by Henning in *CIIr* III. II. 88; the other in Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East*, fig. 402; and both halves in Lukonin, *Kultura*, fig. 25, with commentary pp. 29ff.

[4] F. D. J. Paruck, *Sasanian coins* (Bombay, 1924), pl. I. 1–3.

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

time the temporal power and the religious one were separate, the one exercised by the high-priest Pāpak, the other by his son Shāpūr, king of Stakhr. It seems to me the sword of Pāpak excludes this inference.

Ardashīr I (227–43), who in about 220 succeeded Shāpūr on the throne of Persis, imitated at first the coins of his elder brother, having himself represented with the same tiara, but *en face*, and Pāpak on the reverse, wearing from now on the same star-decorated bonnet. On these coins,[1] as on those of Shāpūr, father and son have the title of king.

Then the type changes. On the obverse, Ardashīr, with the tiara, is seen in profile; on the reverse, Pāpak is replaced by a fire-altar.[2] The legend on the reverse reads at first "the Mazda-worshipper, the divine Ardashīr, king of Iran",[3] which dates the coin after the defeat of Artabanus, then with the longer formula "king of kings of Iran",[4] which means that Ardashīr took the place of his suzerain at the head of the whole empire, an event which took place in 227. The fire is designated as "fire of Ardashīr". It is the fire kindled in honour of the king and as a symbol of his life and his power, at the time of his coronation, and maintained perpetually. Documents were dated in relation to the day of the kindling of the fire. Thus the inscription of Shāpūr I at Bīshāpūr[5] begins with the words "Month of Farvartīn, year 58; from the fire of Ardashīr Shāpūr, year 40; from the fire of Shāpūr (among the kingly fires), year 24". Pāpak held sway over the fire-temple of Anāhitā at Stakhr; his son over the fire of Ohrmazd, which dominated the whole empire. His coronation as king of kings probably took place in the Arsacid capital, Ctesiphon, if we follow Firdausī, who however, by a pardonable anachronism, calls this capital Baghdad.[6] But this did not prevent him from keeping for himself the priesthood of Anāhitā at Stakhr, which seems to have been held by his successors up to Varhrān II, according to Miss Chaumont.[7] Agathias (II. 25) reports that Ardashīr "was initiated to the ceremonies of the magi and performed the mysteries himself".

[1] Paruck, *op. cit.* pl. I. 4–12.

[2] A fire-altar is also shown on the reverse of coins which were perhaps (according to Lukonin, *Kultura*, p. 40) issued under Ardashīr in eastern Iran; it would indicate that the dynasts who issued them were dependent upon the central power; see however below, on the fires destroyed by Ardashīr.

[3] Paruck, *op. cit.*, pl. I. 13.

[4] *Ibid.*, 14–28.

[5] R. Ghirshman, "Inscription du monument de Châpour I à Châpour", *Revue des Arts asiatiques* X (Paris, 1936), pp. 123–9.

[6] Cf. Chaumont, "Où les rois sassanides étaient-ils couronnés?", pp. 61ff.

[7] "Le culte d'Anahita", p. 167.

The altar, on the coins of Ardashīr, is decorated in a peculiar way: it seems to stand on lion's paws at the four corners, two of which are visible. The lion-paws gave the altar the appearance of a throne, similar to that of Darius, for instance, on the Persepolis reliefs, and this would signify that this fire is a king, as the *Kārnāmak-i Ardashīr* tells of the fire Varhrān and as is implied, in the Parsi ritual, by the crown suspended above it and by the fact that, when the Varhrān fire is fed – five times a day – the logs are built into the shape of a throne.[1] This type of altar then disappears until the reign of Shāpūr II.

Two further changes[2] appear under Ardashīr which help fix his image definitively. One is a last accretion to his titulature, by which he goes one step beyond his Arsacid predecessors, namely, he calls himself "from the race of the gods". The other trait is the substitution of a crown for the traditional tiara. The new title and the new headgear characterize him as divine, to the extent that, when he is represented facing Ohrmazd on the reliefs of investiture, the crown, a mural one, is placed on the head of Ohrmazd, with the result that we do not know which one, the god or the king, has been made in the other's image.

We know from Arabic sources that Ardashīr did not assert himself in one day over the whole of Iran. It was not sufficient to defeat Artabanus. It was also necessary to make the kings of the different provinces submit one by one, as Darius had done in his time. On a level with the military conquest there went the affirmation of a religious prerogative. "The letter of Tansar" (or Tōsar) contains a passage where Gushnasp makes the charge against Ardashīr that "the King of Kings has taken away fires from the fire-temples, extinguished them and blotted them out". To this Tansar replies: "The truth is that after Dārā each of the 'kings of the peoples' built his own fire-temple. This was pure innovation, introduced by them without the authority of kings of old. The King of Kings has razed the temples, and confiscated the endowments, and had the fires carried back to their places of origin".[3] Ardashīr's bringing back of trophies to his own fire-temples is actually mentioned by Islamic authors.[4]

Such actions of Ardashīr were bound to please the Mazdean priests, among whom he must have found support. It is therefore puzzling

[1] K. S. Dabu, *The Message of Zarathustra* (Bombay, 1956), p. 97 with a picture reproduced in my *Symbols*, fig. 5.

[2] Leaving aside details which have little or no religious importance, the main one being the effigy of Shāpūr, the heir presumptive, beside his father; see Lukonin, *op. cit.*, pp. 165ff.

[3] Boyce, pp. 16–17.

[4] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 12, 17.

that, in the list of dignitaries at Ardashīr's court given in the inscription of Shāpūr on the Ka'ba, no member of the clergy should be cited. We know of one, however, through the *Dēnkart*, which says (p. 412, ll. 12ff) that Ardashīr "through the just authority of Tōsar commanded all the scattered teachings (preserved in the provinces on Vologeses' order) to be brought to court. Tōsar set about his business and he accepted one (of those teachings) and left the rest out of the canon; and he issued this decree: the interpretation of all the teachings from the Mazdayasnian religion is our responsibility; from now there is no lack of certain knowledge concerning them." In another passage (p. 406, l. 6) it is said that "the orthodox, the just Tōsar was *ēhrpat* and he undertook the task". There is no question in all this of organizing the clergy, and it appears from the very simplicity of the title of Tōsar – whose work was nonetheless essential for the future of Mazdaism – that the idea of an ecclesiastical hierarchy was still to be born. It was to develop in the ensuing reigns. According to Pigulevskaja,[1] Ardashīr, by founding cities and supporting the clergy, meant to combat the influence of the nobles. He is reported[2] as saying: "Know that religion and kingship are two brothers, and neither can dispense with the other. Religion is the foundation of kingship and kingship protects religion. For whatever lacks a foundation must perish, and whatever lacks a protector disappears."

Shāpūr I (243–72) on the rock inscriptions[3] increased his titulature to "king of kings of Iran and non-Iran" on the strength of his western conquests. In gratitude for those victories, he tells us in his trilingual Ka'ba inscription (Parthian, ll. 17ff), "we too in land upon land have established many Varhrān fires and have conferred benefices upon many magi-men and have made great the gods' worship; and hereby we found one fire, Good Fame of Shāpūr by name, for our soul and after-name; one fire, Good Fame of Atur-Anahit by name, for Atur-Anahit's, the Queen of Queens, our daughter's, soul and after-name; one fire, Ohrmazd-Ardashīr by name, for Ohrmazd-Ardashīr's, Great King of the Armenians, our son's, soul and after-name", and in the same way for his other two sons, king Shāpūr of Mēshān, and Narseh, king of India, Sakastān and Tūrastān up to the seashore. He further commands 1,000 lambs, bread and wine to be donated to these fires from the

[1] Pp. 120ff.

[2] Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab* (*Les Prairies d'Or*) II, p. 162, quoted after R. C. Zaehner, *The teachings of the Magi* (London, 1956), p. 85.

[3] Ka'ba, Bīshāpūr, Sar Mashhad, Naqsh-i Rajab.

imperial budget and that one lamb should be sacrificed every day at each fire. Shāpūr's western conquests allowed Mazdean orthodoxy to enlarge its domain, as we shall see presently. They also contributed one additional person to the scene of investiture which Shāpūr took over from the one engraved by his father at Naqsh-i Rustam. On the relief that he himself ordered for his own city of Bīshāpūr, not only does Gordian replace Artabanus under the feet of the royal horse, but in front of Shāpūr another emperor, Valerian, is kneeling as a suppliant.

According to the *Dēnkart* (p. 412, ll. 17ff) "Shāpūr, son of Ardashīr, further collected those writings from the Religion which were dispersed through India, the Byzantine empire and other lands and which treated of medicine, astronomy, movement, time, space, substance, creation, becoming, passing away, change in quality, growth and other processes and organs. These he added to the Avesta and commanded that a fair copy of all of them be deposited at the Royal Treasury; and he examined (the possibility) of bringing all systems (?) into line with the Mazdayasnian religion." It is probable, although we have no text for this, that the king was helped in this task by ēhrpat Kardēr (Kartīr) who asserted in his inscriptions of Naqsh-i Rustam and Sar Mashhad that he first rose to power under Shāpūr. An ēhrpat was a priest of the second rank, entrusted with the teaching of the sacred text as well as with the care of the fire. The term became synonymous with magus in general: already in the Greek version of the Ka'ba inscription, ēhrpat is translated *magos*.[1]

In Kardēr's inscriptions the Mazdayasnian religion, *dēn mazdēsn*, is mentioned three times: "All kinds of recitations of the dēn and other rites of the gods"; "the dēn mazdēsn and the magi"; "these yashts and these rites of the dēn mazdēsn".[2] This is the orthodoxy Kardēr boasts of imposing "in the land of non-Iran reached by the horses and men of the King of Kings", i.e. in regions formerly won to the Iranian religion – in Asia Minor, Syria, etc. – but in which the religion, under the impact of Hellenism, had degenerated: "On the dēn mazdēsn and those magi who were good I bestowed great honour and authority in the land, while heretics and degenerates in the magus-estate, who in matters of the dēn mazdēsn and the cult of the gods led an improper life, these were by me chastised with corporal punishment and reprimanded. They improved and I granted charters and rights for many fires and magi.

[1] Chaumont, "Recherches".

[2] Cited by J. de Menasce, *Une encyclopédie mazdéenne, le Denkart* (Paris, 1958), p. 57.

With the aid of the gods and the King of Kings I founded a number of Varhrān fires in Iran, and I arranged many kin-marriages, and many who had turned unfaithful became faithful, and many who held the doctrines of the demons were by me brought over to the worship of the gods."[1] Kardēr also states that he had brought about that "images were destroyed and the abodes of the yazads, i.e. fire-sanctuaries, were established".[2] According to the Dēnkart, "the Varhrān fire represents goodness, and images are its adversary".[3]

These actions of Kardēr were evidently approved by Shāpūr. The latter does not seem, however, to have wholeheartedly embraced the cause of Mazdaism: witness his attitudes towards Manicheism, Christianity and Judaism. Towards Mānī, he was tolerant, at least in the beginning, since, in an interview he granted him in the first years of his reign[4] he gave him full freedom to preach his religion throughout the empire, with the result that the "Church of Justice" extended from India to Egypt and to the frontiers of the Roman empire. Perhaps Shāpūr hesitated at first between the traditional religion, which his father had favoured, and the new faith, which had the triple advantage of being modern, "scientific" and international. When he eventually chose Mazdaism, it was perhaps on the example of the rival religion and to meet its challenge that he ordered foreign doctrines, collected in India and Greece, to be added to the Avesta; for, under the pretence of recovering stolen books, any foreign doctrine could be adopted.

According to the "Chronicle of Seert",[5] Christians became numerous in Iran because Shāpūr installed many of them in the cities he founded; and we know from John of Ephesus and above all from the Armenian historian Elisaeus Vardapet that the King of Kings gave an edict to the effect that "Magi, Zandiks (Manichaeans), Jews, Christians and all men of whatever religion should be left undisturbed and at peace in their belief".[6] Towards the Jews, Shāpūr was not only tolerant; he even sought their support against the Romans. This, though, produced at best a satisfactory accommodation, rather than a vigorous alliance as under the Parthians.[7] Samuel and the exilarch declared that "the law of the

[1] Cf. J. de Menasce, "La conquête de l'iranisme et la récupération des mages hellénisés", *Annuaire de l'École pratique des Hautes Études et Sciences Religieuses* (Paris, 1956–7), pp. 3ff.

[2] KKZ I. 10, quoted after Boyce, "Iconoclasm", p. 106.

[3] *Denkart*, p. 551, ll. 13–15, quoted after *ibid.*

[4] A. Maricq, "Les débuts de la prédication de Mani", *Mélanges Henri Grégoire* (Brussels, 1951), pp. 245–68 (Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves XI).

[5] Cf. Chaumont, "Les Sassanides", pp. 165ff.

[6] A. Christensen's translation in *CAH* XII, p. 112.

[7] Neusner, *History* II, pp. 44ff.

government is the law", thus accepting the authority of the Sasanians. But, whereas the Christians adopted some of the Iranian festivals, the Jews condemned these.[1]

It seems significant that Shāpūr maintained Kardēr always in the simple rank of an ēhrpat, which he already held under Ardashīr. Only under Shāpūr's successors began Kardēr's promotion, which gave rise to the Mazdean hierarchy. The first step in this direction was made by Ohrmazd-Ardashīr (Hormizd I, 272), who, although he gave audience to Mānī and renewed the protection granted him by Shāpūr,[2] made Kardēr "*magupat* of Ohrmazd". From ēhrpat to magupat, the distance is even greater than the partial similarity of the titles would suggest, for this similarity is fallacious. The term *-pat* does not have at all the same meaning in the two compounds: ēhrpat, literally "master of knowledge" implies no superiority over subordinates, whereas magupat "chief of magi" clearly denotes that one magus rules over some others. One of Kardēr's inscriptions, all of which were written under Varhrān II (Naqsh-i Rajab, 28), says that Kardēr already had under Shāpūr the title of magupat, along with that of ēhrpat.[3] Since the parallel passages in Naqsh-i Rustam and Ka'ba omit magupat, Kardēr cannot have possessed this title under Shāpūr: for he would not have failed to mention it in each of his inscriptions. It is by sheer inadvertence that it has crept into the Naqsh-i Rajab version.

At his coronation Ohrmazd-Ardashīr calls himself "King of Kings of Iran and non-Iran" and, for the first time, this phrase appears on a coin. At the same time, on the reverse, Mithra and Anāhitā are replaced by Ohrmazd. In this way the king proclaims the primacy of the god whose name he bears, and this concurs with the title of "magupat of Ohrmazd" which, as we have seen, he conferred upon Kardēr.

According to Bīrūnī[4] "the man who connected the two Naurōz days (1st and 6th of Fravartīn) with each other is said to have been Ohrmazd son of Shāpūr the Hero, for he raised to feast-days all the days between the two Naurōz. Besides he ordered fires to be kindled on high places... He connected Mihragān and Rāmrōz with each other and raised to feast-days all the days between them, as he had done with the two Naurōz."

[1] S. H. Taqizadeh, "The Iranian festivals adopted by the Christians and condemned by the Jews", *BSOS* x (1940–2), pp. 632–53, cited by Neusner, *History* II, p. 89.

[2] H. Puech, *Le Manichéisme* (Paris, 1947), p. 49.

[3] Pigulevskaja, *Villes*, p. 236.

[4] *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, tr. E. Sachau (London, 1879), pp. 203, 209.

When Ohrmazd-Ardashīr died, Varhrān (Bahrām) I (274–6) ascended the throne instead of their elder brother Narseh, probably thanks to Kardēr's support. For "Ohrmazd's magupat" writes that under Varhrān I he enjoyed greater power and authority at the court and in all the provinces. Indeed Varhrān delivered Mānī into his hands. Mānī died in prison and his religion was persecuted, which proves both the strength of the state religion and Kardēr's influence on the King of Kings.[1] On some of his coins, Varhrān I increases the usual titulature by the curious expression "from the race of the gods of Artaxšēr", perhaps to insist on his legitimacy in a time when the throne was contested.[2] For his investiture relief, Varhrān imitates at Bīshāpūr the one ordered by Shāpūr at Naqsh-i Rajab.

On the death of Varhrān I in 276, Narseh was discarded once more, probably again owing to Kardēr's influence. The king's son, Varhrān II (276–93), ascended the throne; he must have been very young, since he is not cited amongst the members of the Sasanian family enumerated in Shāpūr's inscription on the Kaʿba, which dates from 262. The young king, according to Maqdisī,[3] at first neglected his duties and was reformed by the *mōbadān mōbad* (an obvious anachronism for the "magupat of Ohrmazd"). According to another Muslim author,[4] Varhrān II became disgusted with Mazdaism because of the consanguineous marriages, and embraced Christianity – a pious legend invented in the Christian milieu, like those telling the same thing of Ardashīr and Shāpūr I. According to the "Chronicle of Seert", quoting a bishop of Susa, Varhran II had been brought up at Karkh Guddān, in the diocese of Bet Garmai on the right bank of the Diyala, perhaps on Shāpūr's initiative, to enable him to become acquainted with the sciences of the West. At the beginning of his reign, he questioned some Christian fathers about their doctrines, but this did not prevent him from persecuting the Christians as well as the Manicheans. He was acting under Kardēr's influence.

He ordered only one investiture relief, at Barm-i Delak; the other

[1] Although, according to the "Chronicle of Seert", Bahrām was kind to the Christians; cf. Chaumont, "Les Sassanides", p. 187.

[2] According to J. Harmatta, in a conversation with Lukonin (see *Kultura*, p. 106, n. 5), Artaxšēr is here none other than an epithet of Bahrām; but one would expect, in this case, *ahlav šatr*.

[3] Maqdisī, *Le livre de la Création*, ed. and tr. M. C. Huart, III (Paris, 1903), pp. 158ff, quoted by Chaumont, "Les Sassanides", p. 187.

[4] E. G. Browne, "Nihāyat al-irab", *JRAS* 1900, p. 221, quoted by Chaumont, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

reliefs represent him in triumph, or with his court, or hunting. But the interesting thing is that Kardēr should often be pictured on these reliefs, not only at Naqsh-i Bahrām and Sar Mashhad, but also, as Hinz has noticed,[1] at Naqsh-i Rustam, and perhaps at Barm-i Delak. Also to Varhrān's reign belong Kardēr's portrait and inscription at Naqsh-i Rajab and, in all likelihood,[2] the portrait added to the right, above, of the Triumph of Shāpūr at Naqsh-i Rustam.[3] All this would suffice to prove in how high an esteem Varhrān II held Kardēr. Other testimonies point in the same direction. Kardēr himself, in his inscriptions, boasts of having been promoted "Saviour of the soul of Varhrān" and thereby elevated to the rank of the "grandees of the realm"; of having received the additional title of "Judge of the empire"[4] and those of *advēnpat* "master of rites" and *patixšāy* "ruler"[5] of the fire of Anāhit-Ardashīr at Stakhr and of Lady Anahit. The conferment of these last titles on Kardēr represented a breach, on the part of Varhrān, with the tradition of all his predecessors, who probably had successively inherited the dignity of priest of Anāhitā at Stakhr; possibly for the first time since the advent of the Sasanians, this all-important ecclesiastical title became detached from the royal power. This was perhaps the culmination, in the person of Kardēr, of the slow process he seems to have sedulously encouraged of establishing the Mazdean church as an autonomous power: the relations between the throne and the altar may have been entering a new phase.

Thus promoted to the apex of his career, Kardēr persecuted, as he tells us in his inscriptions (Ka'ba, 8 and 9), "Jews, Buddhists, Brahmins, Nasoreans (Judeo-Christians?),[6] Christians, Maktaks (Mandeans, Manichaeans?)[7] and Zandīks (Mazdean heretics)". His persecution of the Jews does not seem to have been very effective, to judge from rabbinical sources,[8] but there are traces of the persecution of Christians in the "Chronicle of Arbela";[9] and the "Chronicle of Seert" allows us to date to 288 or 287 the persecution of Manichaeans;[10] a Coptic source[11]

[1] *Altiranische Funde*, p. 194.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 191.

[3] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 205, p. 161.

[4] This is the first sign of the juridical rôle played by the magupat, a rôle which will cause the term *mobad* to be translated *qāḍi* by the Arabs; cf. Chaumont, "Recherches", p. 169.

[5] The last two titles are studied by Chaumont, "Le culte d'Anahita", pp. 163ff.

[6] Cf. however J. de Menasce, *Une apologétique mazdéenne du IXe siècle: Škand-Gumānik-Vičār* (Freiburg, 1945), p. 207; and Chaumont, "Les Sassanides", p. 194.

[7] On Nasoreans and Maktaks, see pp. 907–8.

[8] Neusner, *History* II, pp. 17ff.

[9] Chaumont, "Les Sassanides", pp. 195, 197.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

[11] Schmidt and Polotsky, "Ein Mani-Fund in Aegypten", p. 25.

tells us their leader Sisinnios was crucified under Varhrān II. Their name does not appear in the list – unless in the enigmatic *mktk* – but they were perhaps considered as heretics of Mazdaism and therefore included in the term Zandīk.

The persecution of heretics, whoever they were, evidently took place by reference to an orthodoxy. What did this consist of, and what part had Kardēr taken in defining it? It appears from his inscriptions that, although very much interested in politics, he did nevertheless care for doctrinal questions, even if he only continued, in these matters, the work of Tōsar.[1] To judge from the Naqsh-i Rajab and Sar Mashhad inscriptions,[2] the gist of his doctrinal message, in fact its only tenet, is the belief in the hereafter, with reward and punishment for conduct here below: "I make known the path to heaven or hell, regarding deeds of rectitude and deceit . . . What is apparent may be known, that heaven exists and hell exists."[3] The Sar Mashhad inscription (line 29) tells of an encounter of Kardēr's double with his dēn and goes into details, but the message seems to be just the same, namely "Whoever is just, his own dēn will go to Paradise; whoever is evil, his own dēn will go to Hell". This does not go very far to define Kardēr's position in relation to heresy, unless perhaps against some kind of Fatalism (Zurvanite?)[4] in which the belief in responsibility, hence in retribution, had been obliterated. Even if one admits, with Lukonin, that Kardēr must have followed the pure tradition against another Mazdean centre such as Shīz, since he expresses himself only in Middle-Persian, the language of Persis, not, as the kings of the 3rd century, in Parthian, Middle Persian, and Greek, this tells us nothing of the contents of his orthodoxy.

Varhrān II, who often calls himself *arya*, adopted, as seen on his coins and reliefs, an original headgear characterized by a pair of wings, perhaps an allusion to one of Verethraghna's metamorphoses. He is

[1] We must decidedly, with Dr Boyce (pp. 5ff.), leave to each of these two persons his individual existence, not trying either to confound them (on account of the inscriptions' mentioning only the one, the other sources only the other) or, like Lukonin, simply to liquidate Tosar. The silence of the inscriptions concerning Tosar may stem from Kardēr's desire to promote himself by ignoring a predecessor who anyway did not play any political rôle. As to the absence of Kardēr's name in the Mazdean books and in the Arabic authors, we shall try to explain it below, p. 885, as a consequence of a reaction, begun under Narseh, against the authority of the clergy.

[2] The Sar Mashhad one, the most explicit, is translated by P. Gignoux, "L'inscription de Kartir à Sar Mašhad", *JA* 1968, pp. 387–418. See also P. Lecoq, "Remarques sur l'inscription de Sar Mašhad", *Studia Iranica* I (Leiden, 1972), pp. 127ff.

[3] R. N. Frye, "The Middle Persian inscription of Kartīr at Naqš-i Rajab", *IIJ* VIII (1965), p. 224.

[4] Cf. Zaehner, *Dawn*, pp. 205ff, and below, p. 897.

rarely by himself, more often with his wife or their son, or both. The son always wears a bonnet with the head of a beast, a horse, a bird of prey, a Sēmurgh; the woman, when the son is present, also wears such a bonnet, with the head of a horse, dog, or bird. Once only, mother and son have the same animal: a horse. The presence of animal motifs from then on suggests to Lukonin[1] that these reflected Kardēr's reform. But their Mazdean interpretation is, to say the least, problematic, and it appears that in some cases, for instance the bear, they have a purely profane value.[2]

Narseh (293–303) began his struggle for power when Varhrān II was still on the throne. He issued coins even before he was crowned King of Kings. On one of them he is represented (in imitation of Varhrān) with his wife, both wearing pointed tiaras, the queen's terminating in a bird's head. On the others he is alone and wears a diadem with vertical stripe (feathers?) surmounted by a sphere, an imperial attribute which, according to Lukonin,[3] signified open struggle for power. After the coronation, the legend has the increased formula "Mazdean, divine Narseh, King of Kings of Iran and non-Iran, from the race of gods". The king is wearing the same diadem, except sometimes for palmettes. The form of the diadem is found again on the investiture relief at Naqsh-i Rustam, on which Narseh is represented standing, as well as Anāhitā who holds out to him the royal ring. The type of the goddess is the same as on the coins of Ohrmazd-Ardashīr. Through this relief, Narseh evidently wanted to show his attachment to the cult of the goddess. In political terms, it may have meant that, breaking with Varhrān II's attitude and reverting to the tradition of the first Sasanians, Narseh recovered the title of chief of the Stakhr temple which his predecessor and adversary had surrendered to Kardēr.

Already in his struggle for power he had found support in the cities of Mesopotamia, which were not likely to approve of Kardēr's theocracy. Narseh has told of his conquest of the throne in the inscription on the monument he caused to be erected at Paikuli, a place in Kurdistān to which several of his partisans had come to meet him and from which he continued with them his march on the capital. He says he has ascended the throne "in the name of Ohrmazd, of all the gods and of the Lady Anāhitā". This amounted to restoring the situation created by Ardashīr, "who", he says, "was unequalled": all the

[1] *Kultura*, pp. 91ff.
[2] Duchesne-Guillemin, "Art et Religion" and "Art and Religion".
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 117.

temporal and spiritual power was again to be concentrated in the king's hands. In claiming the patronage of Ardashīr, the founder of the dynasty, he was following the tradition of his predecessors Varhrān I and II, but he gave it a new meaning. This is perhaps why the name of Kardēr (which is found in the Paikuli inscription, but in an unintelligible context) has been dropped by the Mazdean tradition.

"At the time of Narseh's coronation", Lukonin writes,[1] "'Amr b. 'Adī, king of the Abgar regions, and one of his warmest adherents, introduced him to a disciple of Mānī, Innaios, chief of the Manichaeans.[2] Everything was as 50 years before, when Mānī had been introduced to Shāpūr at the beginning of the reign. All this goes to prove that Narseh, in destroying the usurpers (Varhrān and Kardēr), annihilated the influence of the high clergy on the conduct of the state." In consequence of this interview, Narseh discontinued the persecution of the Manichaeans. According to another Manichaean source, this persecution had already stopped. We must understand, with Miss Chaumont,[3] that the measures taken by Varhrān II had not borne all their fruit when Narseh ascended the throne. In any case Narseh, although he interested himself in the Manichaeans, sought even less than Shāpūr had done to embrace their religion and adopt it for his people. He was probably pursuing a purely political aim, to secure partisans on the frontiers of the Roman empire, where the Manichaeans were still rather numerous. In any case, he was manifesting his independence from the destroyed theocracy. The Christians, for their part, seem to have benefited by this attitude, if we are to believe the "Chronicle of Seert",[4] which says that they did not suffer under him. There is finally perhaps a grain of truth in the anecdote reported by Tha'ālibī, namely, that Narseh did not frequent the temples and that when questioned about it he would reply "Worship of God has diverted me from worshipping the Fire."[5]

According to a Manichaean source[6] Ohrmazd II resumed the persecution of the Manichaeans, simultaneously with a return of the Mazdean clergy into favour. According to the "Chronicle of Seert"[7] he did not listen to the Magi and did not molest the Christians.

Shāpūr II (309–79) sometimes takes up again, on the reverse of his coins, the "throne-altar", a shape introduced by Ardashīr. This is a

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 121.
[2] Schmidt & Polotsky, "Ein Mani-Fund", p. 29.
[3] "Les Sassanides", p. 201.
[4] Cited *ibid.*
[5] Tha'ālibī, *Histoire des Rois de Perse*, ed. and tr. H. Zotenberg (Paris, 1900), p. 510.
[6] Chaumont, "Les Sassanides", p. 302.
[7] *Ibid.*

way on the part of Shāpūr of appealing to the founder of the dynasty. He also uses either a simple altar, or the altar with a face in the flames, a model launched by Narseh, to whom he therefore seems to have appealed too. According to Ammianus Marcellinus (XIX. I. 3), Shāpūr II, at the battle of Amida, was wearing instead of his crown (which he perhaps never wore outside the palace) a ram's head in gold, set with precious stones, a probable allusion, as Erdmann writes,[1] to one of Verethraghna's incarnations, or to the symbol of the *xwarənah*. The same author also says (XVII. 5. 3) that Shāpūr considered himself (in a letter to Emperor Constantius) as "partner with the stars, brother of the Sun and Moon".

It was during Shāpūr's reign that Constantine officially recognized Christianity. From then on, waging war against Rome and persecuting the Christians were to Iran two facets of one struggle, and persecution took place especially in the north-west provinces and the regions bordering on the Roman empire. As Christensen writes,[2] political, not religious considerations prompted Shāpūr to unleash the greatest persecution of the Christians of Iran. Personally – if we believe the Syrian hagiographs – he was perhaps interested in Christianity. However he did not persecute the Jews, because he had no political reason to do so.[3] The official religion under Shāpūr II was, to judge from the Martyrdom of Mu'ain, widely eclectic. This eclecticism seems to have included Zurvanism, for, in the "Acts of Pusai",[4] this martyr, addressing Shāpūr II, says that according to the Magi, Ohrmazd is the brother of Satan, which means that, at that time at least, Ohrmazd and Ahriman were considered as sons of Zurvān.

Shāpūr founded a fire to the Waters, i.e. to Anāhitā, perhaps a sign[5] that he tried to reconcile the local cult, to which were offered heads of Christian martyrs,[6] with a State "Church" still in the process of formation. However, his conduct in the course of his seventy years of reign was on the whole beneficent to official Mazdaism, and religious tradition has remembered it. It has preserved the memory of the high-priest who helped him in this endeavour, namely, Āturpāt son of Mahraspand and successor of Bahag.

Several texts[7] tell how, at a council summoned to fix the text of the

[1] K. Erdmann, "Die entwicklung der sasanidischen Krone", *AI* XV–XVI (1951), p. 87, n. 4.
[2] P. 250.
[3] Neusner, *History* IV, pp. 49ff.
[4] Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 432; M. Boyce, "Some reflections on Zurvanism", *BSOAS* XIX (1957), p. 307.
[5] K. Barr, *Avesta oversat og forklaret* (Copenhagen, 1954), p. 21.
[6] P. Bedjan (ed.), *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, II (Paris, 1891), p. 581.
[7] Enumerated in Christensen, p. 304, n. 12.

Avesta, Āturpāt, to prove the truth of his doctrine, submitted to the ordeal of molten metal and was victorious over all kinds of sectarians and heretics. The worst of these were called fatalists.[1] We recognize the enemies of Kardēr, whom he combatted with his doctrine of heaven and hell. But we should not conclude that Āturpāt opposed Zurvanism.[2] For if we can base an opinion on the sayings attributed to him, he appears to have been more interested in ethics than in theology. However, he took care to limit the rôle of fate in human life: "It is said that Āturpāt, son of Mahraspand, divided the things of this world into twenty-five parts: five (he assigned) to fate, five to (human) action, five to nature, five to character, and five to heredity. Life, wife, children, sovereignty, and property are chiefly through fate. Salvation and damnation, and the qualities that make a (good) priest, warrior, or husbandman are chiefly through action. Eating, walking, going in to one's wife, sleeping, and satisfying the needs of nature are chiefly through nature. Worthiness, friendship, goodness, generosity, and rectitude are chiefly through character. Intelligence, understanding, body, stature, and appearance are chiefly through heredity."[3] He made a simple distinction between this world and the next: "You should not attach any value to the world,[4] nor should you account it as anything, yet you should not abandon it. You should not attach any value to it because whatever is fated is bound to happen; and you should not account it as anything because it is transient and you will have to leave it; and you should not abandon it because spirit can only be won through the material world." One should surrender not to fate, but to God: "Do not regard this world as a (permanent) principle[5] for it has not long existed. Leave (all care for) the things of this world to God, and concern yourself (rather) with God's business, nothing doubting. (Then only) will the world be presented to you in a way that both your body and your soul will be perfected. Take to yourself personally the things of the spirit; for if you reject these, you will lose all worldly good. Make God a guest within your body; for if you make him a guest within your body, then you make him a guest within the whole material world."

From the reign of Ardashīr II (379–83) on, inscriptions and reliefs cease to be engraved in Persis; he has his own investiture represented

[1] *Škand-Gumānik-Vičār* x. 70 (pp. 118–19). [2] Cf. Boyce, *loc. cit.*

[3] *Dēnkart*, p. 568, ll. 3–12, quoted after Zaehner, *Dawn*, p. 243.

[4] *Dēnkart*, p. 547, l. 21, after *ibid.* p. 278.

[5] *Dēnkart*, p. 216, ll. 9–17, after *ibid.* p. 301.

at Ṭāq-i Bustān in Media. What was the reason for this change of place? Probably a desire to be independent from the religious centre of Stakhr, for the great goddess worshipped there appears from then on forgotten. Whereas two deities take part in Ardashīr's investiture, Anāhitā is not one of them, and she does not reappear until the reign of Pērōz. Her absence suggests that coronation did not take place in the south any more, but in a shrine in Media.

Miss Chaumont has suggested that "it would perhaps be wise to contemplate the possibility of two distinct, successive coronations. The first one, reflected in 'The Letter of Tansar', which would better be called enthronement, was celebrated in the presence of the princes of the blood, of the grandees and high dignitaries immediately after and at the very place of the proclamation."[1] The relevant passage in "The Letter of Tansar" reads as follows:[2] "The King of Kings has not made this a rule, that none who comes after him should name his heir, nor has he made it final . . . We have desired that he should write three copies of a letter in his own hand, and entrust each to a faithful and reliable person, one to the chief mobad, another to the chief secretary, and the third to the commander-in-chief; so that when the world is abandoned by the King of Kings . . . then they will cause the chief mobad to be in readiness; and these other two persons will come together, and they will deliberate, and will break the seal of the writings to see on which son the choice of these persons will fall. If the chief mobad's choice accords with the choice of all three, it will be announced to the people; but if the mobad is at variance, nothing will be divulged. The people will hear neither of the writings nor of the mobad's decision and utterance, till the mobad has retired alone with the herbads and with devout and ascetic men and has seated himself in worship and prayer. Behind them virtuous and pure men will raise their hands in amens and entreaties, in submission and supplication. When they cease at the time of evening prayer, they will resolve upon whatever God . . . has put into the mobad's mind. That night they will set the crown and throne in the audience-room and the groups of noblemen will take up their positions in their own places . . . They will take up that prince and seat him on the throne and place the crown on his head . . ." A less clerically biased version is preserved in the "Testament of Ardashīr" and summarized by Dr Boyce[3] as follows: "Ardashīr advised his descend-

[1] "Où les rois sassanides étaient-ils couronnés?", p. 71.
[2] Pp. 61ff. [3] P. 62, n. 1.

ants to name their own successors, but not to divulge their choice. Instead they were to write the name on four pieces of paper, which, signed and sealed, were to be given to four persons among the dignitaries of the realm. On the king's death the four copies were to be opened and compared, in order to find the heir. There is no question of the opinion of the dignitaries themselves having anything to do with the selection. They were merely to be the custodians of the king's choice." "The second coronation," Miss Chaumont goes on, "is likely to have been celebrated in great pomp before the sacred fire and, needless to say, with the participation of the magi . . . There is every reason to believe that this ceremony comprised, besides the imposition of the crown, rites of religious investiture similar to those of the sacring of the Achaemenians as described by Plutarch in his life of Artaxerxes."[1] We may surmise, then, that the first ceremony took place in the political capital, Ctesiphon, whereas the second was performed in the religious capital and moved north with it. Did this transfer happen under Ardashīr II, or only under Varhrān V, or as late as the reign of Khusrau, to which belong the first vestiges found at Takht-i Sulaimān? We do not know. Another novelty appears under Ardashīr II. On his investiture relief Mithra stands on a lotus, a solar symbol imported from Egypt, either directly or via Buddhist Gandhara, in either case perhaps a further token of independence from the traditions of the Persian clergy.

Shāpūr III (383–8) seems to have put Anāhitā back into favour, for he imitates her crown. He was tolerant towards the Christians, and this seems to have aroused the opposition of the nobles, who did away with him.

Yazdgard (399–420) had a good reputation with the Christians, a bad one with the Iranian ruling classes, probably because he resisted both the clergy and the nobles. Peace having been made with the Romans, a *modus vivendi* was found for the Christians of Iran. He was also kind to the Jews and had married a Jewess.[2] But near the end of his reign a priest in the city of Ohrmazd-Ardashīr in Susiana, who destroyed a fire-temple near the Christian church and refused to rebuild it, was put to death.[3] Another Christian was also executed for a similar affair. Also near the end of his reign[4] Yazdgard appointed as his *vazurg framatār*, or Prime Minister, Mihr-Narseh, who was to keep this charge

[1] *Loc. cit.*
[2] G. Widengren, "The status of the Jews in the Sasanian empire", *IA* I (1961), pp. 139ff.
[3] Labourt, pp. 105ff.
[4] Not at the beginning; cf. Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 76, n. 1.

under Varhrān V and Yazdgard II. It was also under Yazdgard that the calendar was brought up to date, according to Bīrūnī.[1]

Varhrān V (Gōr) (420–38) at the beginning of his reign defeated the Hephtalites, killed their chief and offered the latter's crown to the temple of the Gushnasp fire at Shīz. At the same time there broke out against the Christians a persecution which had been prepared under the preceding reign by Mihr-Shāpūr, the chief of the magi. One Christian source was to call the latter *mobadān mobad* (< *magupatān magupat*) in connection with the 446 persecution.[2] This is the first evidence of this title, created on the pattern of *šāhānšāh*, and destined to head the religious hierarchy. A war with the Romans had started in 421 as a consequence of the persecution. It was waged by Mihr-Narseh and ended the following year with a treaty granting religious freedom to the Christians of Iran and to the Zoroastrians of the Byzantine empire, insignificant in number. Then the influence of converted Mazdeans inside the Christian Church helped bring about the separation, decreed by a synod, of the Christian Church of Iran from the Western Church. From now on, a Christian was no longer, because of his religion, an ally of the Romans, and so an enemy of Iran. Nevertheless, the religious question remained posed in Armenia, whose obedience was rendered dubious by increasing adherence to Christianity.

Yazdgard II (438–57) initiated the systematic persecution of Christians and Jews in Armenia.[3] He composed with Mihr-Narseh and the Mazdean dignitaries an edict, apocryphal texts of which are quoted by Elisaeus and Lazarus of Pharp, enjoining the Armenians to give up Christianity; and Mazdean missionaries were sent them in great numbers.[4] The Armenians were defeated in 451. But the Iranian governors who successively ruled Armenia restored religious freedom after Yazdgard's death. According to Elisaeus, Yazdgard II studied all the religions of his realm, but remained faithful to Mazdaism.[5] He celebrated his victory over various neighbouring peoples by sacrificing on the fire-altar numerous white bulls and shaggy he-goats.[6] A bust of him has been found in Palace II of Kish.

Mihr-Narseh appears to have pursued his own individual policy, not always with the king's approval. According to the *Mātīkān-i hazār*

[1] *Chronology*, p. 33; Lewy, "Le calendrier perse", p. 29.
[2] Wikander, *Feuerpriester*, p. 51.
[3] Widengren, "The status of the Jews", p. 142.
[4] Chaumont, "Recherches", p. 74.
[5] Christensen, p. 284.
[6] Widengren, *Stand und Aufgaben*, p. 46.

Dātastān,[1] Varhrān V gave him "to the service of the Artavahišt fire and of the Afzūn-Xwatāy fire"[2] and kept him at these fires for several years. But Mihr-Narseh, because of a reputation of sinfulness, was taken back by Yazdgard II and kept for several years in the royal domain. "Then Pērōz, after consulting Martbut, magupatān magupat, and other judges, put him back in the service not of the same fires, but of that of Ohrmazd-Pērōz." However, Mihr-Narseh founded four fires on his own estates in the district of Ardashīr-Khwarra (Fīrūzābād).[3] The first of them was for himself and called Mihr-Narsiyān. The other three were for his three sons, on one of whom he conferred the novel title of *ēhrpatān ēhrpat*, indicating a hierarchy distinct from that of the magupats headed by the magupatān magupat. Of the functions corresponding to the new title, we have no idea. Perhaps it was purely honorific. This son's name, anyhow, was Zurvāndād, an indication perhaps of his father's Zurvānite leanings, as is the fact, interpreted by Wikander,[4] that Mihr-Narseh had 12,000 trees (a characteristic Zurvānite figure) planted in his sanctuaries.

Pērōz (459–84) caused himself to be represented at Ṭāq-i Bustān,[5] receiving investiture from Anāhitā. The Iranian tradition, reported by Ṭabarī, regarded him favourably for his religious feelings and his knowledge of Mazdaism.

Valgash (Balāsh) was "a friend and admirer of the Romans", Labourt writes,[6] "and had initiated in Armenia a policy of religious tolerance and probably imposed it upon the magi of the whole empire, which was not to their liking. As he tried on the other hand to relieve the famished population, he caused the rich dissatisfaction: he was dethroned by both the clergy and the nobility."

The reign of Pērōz's son Kavād (488–531) was interrupted several times. He issued coins at the death of his father, even before ascending the throne, for which his brother Valgash contended with him. On this first issue the legend bears, beside his name *Kavāt(y)*, the epithet KDY, to be read *kay*, a title which already Yazdgard II and Pērōz had assumed. This title, as well as Kavād's personal name, bear witness to the desire

[1] J. de Menasce, *Feux et fondations pieuses dans le droit sassanide* (Paris, 1964), pp. 27ff.

[2] This can only mean, in the case of a *vazurg framatār*, that he received the prebend of the fires in question, as seen by de Menasce, *op. cit.* p. 52. See further pp. 640f.

[3] On the location of these fires, see Vanden Berghe, "Récentes découvertes".

[4] *Feuerpriester*, p. 177.

[5] This has been demonstrated by K. Erdmann, "Das Datum des Ṭāq-i Bustān", *AI* IV (1937), pp. 79ff, against the common opinion which attributes Ṭāq-i Bustān to Khusrau II. [For the attribution of the reliefs to Khusrau II see pp. 1085f.]

[6] P. 154.

on the part of his parents to derive his authority from the ancient heroes of the East Iranian epic. For his full name, Kavi Kavāta, was borne by one of the kings of that epic, who founded the dynasty of the Kayanians. This innovation on the part of Kavād seems to have a religious significance, for the Kayanians, unlike the Achaemenians, were extolled in the yašts of the Avesta.[1] This part of the sacred text was perhaps, therefore, revalued at that time. It would be exaggerated to contend, as Wikander did,[2] that the whole Avesta was only then recognized as the sacred text. But it must be added that, from the reign of Kavād on, astral symbols invade the obverse of the coins: the king has from now on a crescent over each shoulder and a star over his head,[3] and the importance of such symbols was to increase continually until it reached its climax under Khusrau II.[4]

It is under Kavād that Iran underwent its greatest social and religious crisis, under the impact of Mazdak.[5] This reformer, whose doctrines were partly inspired by those of Mānī, was granted an interview by Kavād – as Shāpūr had received Mānī a long time before – but with a more decisive success. It is difficult to understand why a king thought fit, unless he really believed in it, to adopt a doctrine which had every chance of shaking the very bases of society. Did he hope, as Nöldeke already saw,[6] by abolishing property and the family, to suppress all intermediaries between himself and the people and therefore reign over an amorphous, docile mass? Mazdak taught, like Mānī, that darkness should be fought. But contrary to what Mānī said, darkness acted blindly and at random. One could therefore hope to triumph over it more easily than in Manichaeism. The way to follow was principally the same: abstinence and chastity, prohibition of killing and of eating meat. But the Mazdakites added the abolition of social inequalities, i.e. of private property, the main cause of all hatred, and everything was to be shared as communal property, including (according to Mazdak's detractors) women. These radical views had great success among the poor, and directly threatened the rich as well as the Mazdean clergy. Both categories soon understood this: they leagued together and imprisoned Kavād, replacing him by his brother Jāmāsp (497–9).

[1] Cf. pp. 389ff.
[2] *Feuerpriester*, p. 152.
[3] Erdmann, "Sasanidische Krone", p. 103, n. 62.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[5] The latest treatment of Mazdakism as a whole is by Pigulevskaja, *Villes*, chapter V, "Le mouvement Mazdakite"; but see now Pugliese Caratelli, "Les doctrines . . . de Mazdak". [Since the chapter was written, Klima's new monograph on the subject has appeared; see p. 992.]
[6] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 461.

Two years later, Kavād succeeded in escaping and took refuge, as on his first exile, with the Hephtalites. Their king, whose daughter he had married, gave him an army with which he came back into Iran and recovered his throne. He is likely to have received the help, for various reasons, of a number of people, including small land-holders, and to have profited by a recrudescence of revolutionary fervour caused by a bad harvest in 499–500; and perhaps he did at first allow the Mazdakite leaders a certain freedom of action. But he had to think of restoring the finances of the state: with the help of the Hephtalite army he subdued some dissident tribes and waged a profitable war against Byzantium. Cured of his egalitarian illusions, he decided to destroy the Mazdakites. Their leader perished in a massacre, either under Kavād or under his successor. Another victim was Siyāvush who had helped Kavād to escape: accused of violating the laws and customs of the Iranians, for instance by causing his wife to be interred, he was discarded by the king and executed. Kavād was helped in his task of restoration by his son and heir-presumptive Khusrau.

Khusrau I (531–79) continued on the throne the work of his father, and in this way the Mazdakite upheaval happened to prepare, in a kind of *argumentum ad absurdum*, the advent of a strong state and of a definitively established Mazdean Church. Mazdean tradition gives Khusrau the incomparable title of Anōshirvān "with the immortal soul", no doubt for having crushed the Mazdakites and caused the "good religion" to triumph. The passage in the *Dēnkart* (p. 413, ll. 9ff.) reporting this action is almost contemporaneous, since it calls Khusrau "the present Majesty": "His present Majesty, the King of Kings, Khusrau, son of Kavād, after he had put down irreligion and heresy with the greatest vindictiveness according to the revelation of the Religion in the matter of all heresy, greatly strengthened the system of the four castes and encouraged precise argumentation, and in a diet (?) of the provinces he issued the following declaration: The truth of the Mazdayasnian religion has been recognized. Intelligent men can with confidence establish it in the world by discussion. But effective and progressive propaganda should be based not so much on discussion as on pure thoughts, words, and deeds, the inspiration of the Good Spirit, and the worship of the gods paid in absolute conformity to the word. What the chief Magians of Ohrmazd have proclaimed, do we proclaim; for among us they have been shown to possess spiritual insight. And we have asked and ask of them the fullest exposition of doctrine both of that which concerns

spiritual insight and of that which deals with conduct on earth, and for this we give thanks to the gods. Fortunately for the good governance of the country the realm of Iran has gone forward relying on the doctrine of the Mazdayasnian religion, that is the synthesis of the accumulated knowledge of those who have gone before us throughout the whole of Xwanīras. We have no dispute with those who have other convictions, for we (ourselves) possess so much both in the Avestan language through pure oral tradition or reduced to writing in books and memoranda and in the vulgar idiom through oral transmission – in short the whole original wisdom of the Mazdayasnian religion. Whereas we have recognized that, insofar as all dubious doctrines, foreign to the Mazdayasnian religion, reach this place from all over the world, further examination and investigation prove that to absorb and publish abroad knowledge foreign to the Mazdayasnian religion does not contribute to the welfare and prosperity of our subjects as much as one religious leader who has examined much and pondered much in his recital (of the ritual); with high intent and in concert with the perspicacious, most noble, most honourable, most good Magian men, we do hereby decree that the Avesta and Zand be studied zealously and ever afresh and that what is acquired therefrom may worthily increase and fertilize the knowledge of our subjects."[1]

Another passage in the *Dēnkart* (p. 219, ll. 7ff) tells in more detail what orthodoxy consists of: "One (of Khusrau's counsels) was to eradicate the teachings and practices of heretics from the realm of Iran by defeating them utterly: one, to put into practice the teachings of the word of the Religion and the worship and rites of the gods together with the law and customs in accordance with the teachings and practice of the disciples of Āturpāt, son of Mahraspand, who came from the province of Makrān: one, not to neglect in the provinces of Iran hospitality to holy men, the good care of the beneficent fire, and the purification of the good waters: one, to cause religion and learning to prosper by being exceedingly zealous and by applying one's energy and thought to it, to propagate it widely among the sound of heart [i.e. the orthodox] and jealously to withhold it from evil heretics: one, to increase in full measure the service and rites of the gods within the provinces of Iran and to smite, smash and overthrow the idol-temples and disobedience [i.e. unorthodoxy] that comes from the Adversary and the demons: one, to dedicate thought, strength, and body and life

[1] Zaehner's translation, *Zurvan*, p. 8.

to the propagation and wide dissemination of our law: one, to offer one's force and possessions to one's own kin and to withhold them from strangers and enemies."[1]

In the Sasanian law-book a case is recorded which took place under Khusrau I of a man who had "a house as an image-shrine". The priests ordered the image to be removed from it, and set in its place a fire-altar.[2]

In Khusrau's coinage his name continues his father's tradition, since this, like Kavād's, is that of an epic hero of the Kayānī dynasty: Kavi Haosravah. Mas'ūdī characterizes as follows the religious work of Khusrau: "He united the people of his realm in the religion of the Magians, and forbade them discussion, divergence of opinion, and controversy." The same author describes Khusrau's palace at Shīz and tells us he transported the fire of Shīz to the fountain, probably meaning that he brought it nearer the lake, and that he destroyed the idols of the temple. According to Ibn al-Faqīh, Khusrau transported to Shīz the Gushnasp fire, formerly founded by his namesake Kavi Haosravah in Āzarbāījān. He deposited there, as perhaps Varhrān V had done before him (and as Khusrau II was to do) the booty of his victories.[3] But, although he supported orthodoxy, he was not impervious to Greek and Indian influences, resembling in this his distant predecessor Shāpūr I. He seems to have recognized the possibility of attaining truth other than through Avestan revelation alone; he declared, according to the *Dēnkart* (p. 415), that "Those who say that it is possible to understand Being through the revelation of the Religion and also by analogy, are to be deemed researchers [after truth]. Those who expound [this doctrine] clearly, are to be deemed wise and versed in the Religion. And since the root of all knowledge is the doctrine of the Religion concerning both ideal potentiality and material manifestation, a man [who speaks in this cause] speaks wisely even though he derives the doctrine from no Avestan revelation. So he should be esteemed as [speaking] in accordance with the revelation of the Religion, the function of which is to give instruction to the sons of men."[4] This may refer to Greek philosophy and wisdom, for Greek thinkers and their doctrines were well received by Khusrau.[5]

In short, Khusrau's reign seems to have been both "orthodox" and

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 53.
[2] After Boyce, "Iconoclasm", p. 107, where reference is made to a similar, undated case.
[3] On the testimony of the Arab authors, see Wikander, *Feuerpriester*, pp. 151ff.
[4] Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 9.
[5] J.D.-G. *La religion*, pp. 289ff.

"liberal". As far as the Zurvānite "heresy" is concerned, the edict quoted in the *Dēnkart* contains no clear condemnation of it,[1] and, on the other hand, the actual beliefs of the Magians, as expounded by an outsider, Catholicos Mar Abā, comprise the myth of Zurvān, "the father of their gods". Even Khusrau's attitude toward Christianity was not a simple one. According to the Passion of Gregory, in the regions in which Christians were in a minority, the churches, and especially the cloisters, were destroyed. However, Khusrau had the power to overrule the persecutors. Dādhormizd, the great magupat, to whom the king had handed over Mar Abā, did not dare to have him executed, and Khusrau eventually set him free.[2]

Under Ohrmazd IV (578–90) the Jewish schools of Susa and Pumbadita were closed; but "unlike his father, he did not govern with the support of the noblemen and the Magi. Perhaps these two classes had acquired, thanks to Khusrau's great age, too dominating an influence, which was bound to displease a young king who wanted to rule personally. Ohrmazd was therefore led, like Yazdgard I and for similar reasons, to show himself favourable to the Christians."[3]

Varhrān VI Chōbēn in his revolt against Ohrmazd IV and Khusrau II was supported by the rich Jews, who probably hoped to see repealed Ohrmazd's order to close their schools.[4]

Khusrau II Parvēz (590–628) married a Christian woman, the daughter of the Byzantine emperor Maurice, and was perhaps himself a Christian, if we are to believe Eutychius.[5] He prayed to St Sergius, martyr, and returned a richly decorated golden cross which Khusrau I had taken away. Although he at first proclaimed religious freedom provided Christians abstained from trying to convert Mazdeans, when Heraclius' soldiers invaded his territories he persecuted the Christians, both Monophysite and Nestorian.[6] He was essentially superstitious, wore an amulet against death, surrounded himself with astrologers and dabbled in astrology himself. Although he founded 353 fire-temples and put 12,000 ēhrpats to their service – perhaps another sign of superstition – Mazdean tradition (in the "Book of Zhāmāsp") condemns him as an unjust tyrant, responsible for the decline of the Religion and of the empire.

The close rapprochement that took place with Byzantium in the first years of Khusrau II's reign did not have the consequences that

[1] Despite a possible allusion; see Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 48.
[2] Labourt, p. 190.
[3] Labourt, pp. 200ff.
[4] Widengren, "The status of the Jews", p. 147.
[5] [Cf. p. 579.]
[6] Labourt, pp. 208, 234.

might have been hoped for, in view of the example of Khusrau I's interests in philosophy (or that of Justinian lending workmen to build the palace of Ctesiphon).[1] The crown of Khusrau II imitated those of Shāpūr and of Varhrān II. His coins have an enigmatic feature: on the reverse of some of them, the altar with a radiate head is reproduced, but the head is feminine. I have suggested[2] identifying her as Anāhitā, whose connection with the fire would thus be strikingly brought out. We can then cite the testimony of Firmicus Maternus[3] who writes: "Ignem in duas diuidunt potestates, naturam eius ad utrumque sexum transferentes et uiri et feminae simulacro ignis substantiam deputantes"; and Hašu, the martyr, defiantly maintained[4] that "the fire is no daughter of God", which seems to imply the identification of the fire with Anāhitā. Perhaps a connection was seen between Anāhitā, as God's daughter, and Ātaš, the son of God, until eventually she became nothing more than his feminine version. Was Anāhitā's reappearance, as Wikander suggests,[5] indicative of a return "to the origins", to Persis, homeland of the dynasty? At the end, at the time of the greatest peril, it was in Ardashīr's temple to Anāhitā at Stakhr that Yazdgard III was elected king.[6]

THE RELIGION AND THE PEOPLE

Orthodoxy and heresy

What did the Mazdean religion mean to the average Iranian? Priesthood being hereditary, full religious teaching was only handed down in the priestly families by the father to those of his sons who were destined to succeed him in his charge. But every child in every *vēh-dēn* family was received into the community through a ceremony of initiation. The exact age is unknown, but since it is now about 7 in India and 10 in Iran it seems safe to put it somewhere between these two figures.[7] The child had to recite prayers, a profession of faith, and perhaps also the *Patēt* or Confiteor. He had therefore to be taught these texts, which introduced him to the chief tenets of Mazdaism.

[1] See p. 581.
[2] *La Religion*, p. 292.
[3] *De errore profanarum religionum*, L. 5.
[4] L. H. Gray, "Zoroastrian material in the Acta Sanctorum", *Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society*, 1913–14, pp. 37–55.
[5] *Feuerpriester*, p. 55.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[7] According to M. Boyce, *A Persian stronghold*, p. 236, initiation takes place in Iran between the ages of twelve and fifteen; the Parsis may have reduced the age under Indian influence.

One of these tenets is the prohibition of the *daēva*-worship. The *Dēnkart* (p. 792, l. 18) formally condemns the worship of Indar, Savul, and Ahriman. We do not know if the description given by Plutarch (*De Is. et Osir.*, 46) of the cult of Ahriman, with offerings of a herb called *omomi* and of the blood of a slaughtered wolf, applied to the Arsacid and Sasanian periods, but we read in the *Dēnkart* (p. 182, l. 6) that "the perverted, devilish, unrighteous rite of the 'mystery of the sorcerers' consists in praising Ahriman, the destroyer, in prowling around in great secrecy, in keeping home, body, and clothes in a state of filthiness and stench, in smearing the body with dead matter and excrement, in causing discomfort to the gods and joy to the demons, in chanting services to the demons and calling on them by name as befits their activity, in the worship of the demons and false religion, in thinking in accordance with the Evil Mind, in false speech and unrighteous action – the disreputable sorcerers and villains – and in all else that befits the devilish and is far from the godly."[1] The existence of such *dēv*-worshippers is corroborated not only by the Manichaean evidence, as Zaehner saw,[2] but by Kardēr's inscriptions also, which read (Ka'ba, line 9) that "as the rites of Ohrmazd and the gods increased in place after place throughout the whole empire and as the Mazdean religion and the magi were in great honour in the empire, the gods and water and fire and cattle attained great satisfaction in the empire [but] Ahriman and the dēvs suffered a great blow and wound."

Kardēr also insisted, as we saw, on the doctrine of retribution, of heaven and hell, and it may be said that disbelief in this doctrine and worship of the dēvs were only two aspects of one attitude, the essential heresy, the more so as the *Dēnkart* tells of one arch-sorcerer, both that he "proclaimed disobedience and disregard of authority by not teaching that virtue is rewarded and that there is no escape from the punishment of sin" (p. 211, l. 21), and that "by setting himself against the gods and by currying favour with the demons, he bade [men] abandon the worship of the gods and in divers ways to perform worship of the demons". (p. 212, l. 5).[3]

This attitude seems to have been characteristic of Zurvanism,[4] a doctrine condemned by the *Dēnkart* (p. 829, ll. 1-5) in the following terms: "From the saying of Zoroaster concerning the cry of the demon Ariš(k) [Envy] to mankind: 'Ohrmazd and Ahriman were two brothers

[1] Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 14.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 30.
[4] [See also pp. 938, 973f on Zurvanism.]

in one womb. Of them an Amahraspand chose the worse inasmuch as his adherents preach the worship of demons and that they should offer cattle to the demons of the planets'."

Although formally condemned, Zurvanism is still reflected, however indirectly, in the Mazdean cosmogony and theology. The first thing that strikes us, in the cosmogony as expounded in the *Bundahišn*, is that it immediately posits Ohrmazd and Ahriman separated by the void. They seem to have so existed from all eternity, when Ahriman's invidious attack initiates the whole process. The question of their origin is ignored. Yet, it was posed, ever since Ohrmazd had taken the place of his Beneficent Spirit in the struggle against the Destructive Spirit. Previously – in Zarathustra's system – Ahura Mazda (some think) was the father of the two Spirits. However that may be, now that Ahura Mazda has come down, so to speak, to the level of Angra Mainyu (Ahriman) – a transformation attested in the *Vidēvdāt* and datable thanks to Aristotle's testimony[1] – the question was inevitable as to who was the father of the two conflicting twins.

A solution was provided by Zurvanism: it is Zurvān who is the father of Ohrmazd and Ahriman. This solution, condemned as we saw by the *Dēnkart*, is already attested by Eudemos of Rhodes. Later, in the Sasanian period, it is preserved in a more detailed fashion in Syriac and Armenian versions. But the most interesting traces of the Zurvanite heresy are those it has left in Mazdean orthodoxy, some features of which cannot otherwise be explained. Apart from the negative one, already mentioned, several other such features can be distinguished.

In Mazdean orthodoxy, when Ohrmazd creates the material world, he produces at first, from Infinite Light, a form of fire, out of which all things are to be born. This form of fire[2] is "bright, white, round, and visible from afar". Gayōmart, the Primal Man, was also conceived of as spherical, in the image of the sky. If man resembles the sky, the sky resembles man, and several texts in fact tell us that the world is in human shape: according to the *Bundahišn*, Ohrmazd bears in himself, as a mother her child, the ideal form of the world; according to the *Pahlavī Rivāyat*, Infinite Light produces a giant body, whose parts become the parts of the world. Now, another of these texts gives us the name of this giant body or form of fire. Manuščihr, in the *Dātastān-i Dēnīk* (Question 63) writes that "Ohrmazd, the lord of all things, produced from Infinite

[1] See I. Gershevitch, "Zoroaster's own contribution", *JNES* XXIII (1964), pp. 12–38.
[2] J. D.-G. "The form of fire" in *Dr J. N. Unvala Memorial Volume* (Bombay, 1964), pp. 14ff.

Light a form of fire whose name was that of Ohrmazd and whose light was that of fire". Ohrmazd creating a body which is called Ohrmazd – what can be the meaning of this? It seems to me that everything becomes clear if we are prepared to consider the phrase as a rather clumsy adaptation of a Zurvanite one which said in effect: Zurvān creates Ohrmazd – not forgetting that in Manichaeism, Ohrmazd is the name of Cosmic Man, issued from the supreme god Zurvān.[1]

Ohrmazd's proposition of a pact with Ahriman seems another Zurvanite feature. According to Zātspram, a theologian with Zurvanite tendencies, it is Zurvān who proposes the pact to Ahriman; and it is indeed difficult to see why Ohrmazd, who knows that the fight will come to an end and that he will triumph, should need to talk to Ahriman about it; whereas in the Zurvanitic system it is Zurvān who divides the power between his sons, Ohrmazd and Ahriman.

Perhaps the notion of the millennia was essentially Zurvanite, since the ascription of the whole history of the world to a predetermined number of years – and to a number of millennia corresponding to that of the signs of the Zodiac – does seem to imply a recognition of Time as almighty.

Then there is – last, not least – the Mazdean quadrinity, which can hardly be explained except as an adaptation of the Zurvanite quadrinity. The latter is attested in several Syriac texts citing, besides Zurvān, three other names, Ašoqar, Frašoqar and Zaroqar, who are given as separate gods but are really hypostases of the first one. Ašoqar and Frašoqar stem from Avestan epithets, "making virile" and "making resplendent", and Zaroqar is a plausible substitute for another Avestan adjective, *maršō.kara* "making decrepit": the three names characterize time in connection with the three moments of human life: youth, maturity, old age. Moreover, Zurvān, as the supreme god of Manichaeism, was called a god with four faces (*tetraprosōpos*). And Zurvān's quadrinity manifested itself under yet other forms, which have been studied by Zaehner.[2] For instance, an anonymous Syriac text connects the tetrad with the four elements. But the most interesting tetrad is the one associating Zurvān with Light, Power, and Wisdom, for it seems to be the origin of the Mazdean tetrad.

It is stated in the *Bundahišn* (3.2) that Ohrmazd has three other names, namely Time, Space and Religion. Now, to obtain this quadrinity, starting from the Zurvanite one, it was sufficient to replace Zurvān by

[1] Cf. pp. 975 f, 1193, below.

[2] *Zurvan*, pp. 219ff.

Time, Light by Space, Wisdom by Religion and Power by Ohrmazd, and to put the latter at the head of the series. But why this borrowing? Was it solely a question of neutralizing Zurvanism? The necessity was felt also of accounting for the rôle of time and space in the genesis of the world. If Ohrmazd resorts to creation, it is in order to exterminate Ahriman. With this view, he must for a limited time (which a pact will determine) and in the intermediate space between himself and his adversary, create the world. He therefore *needs* time and space. Can one conclude that they were superior to him? This, in the Mazdean vision, would be blasphemy. The solution proposed makes them identical to him – within the quadrinity.

When did this important shift take place? The Mazdean quadrinity was reflected, as briefly indicated above, in the calendar.[1] The three *daθuš* "creators", in the list of day-names really stood for Time, Space and Wisdom, as appears from the Pahlavī version of the Sīrōza.[2] This list of day-names therefore presupposes the existence of the Mazdean quadrinity. Consequently, if this list was already in use at Nisā in the 1st century B.C., as seems plausible on the basis of the scanty evidence, the conclusion is inescapable that the Mazdean quadrinity was formed at an even earlier date and that, *a fortiori*, the Zurvanite speculation, from which it stemmed and against which it reacted, belonged to an even more distant time. In other words, Zurvanism must have flourished already in the first centuries of the Arsacid period. In view of the date, it may very well have originated under the influence of Hellenism and in connection with the spread of astrology. It will be noted that one of the names of the "form of fire" is *spihr*, borrowed from Greek *sphaira*. Such a conception, placing Time or Fate above everything and beyond good and evil, was bound to appear as the very negation of the ethical dualism of the old Iranian religion, as daevayasnism incarnate. It would seem natural that such a peril should have evoked, in defence of tradition, the formation of an orthodoxy. It seems, in any case, that this orthodoxy, including the Mazdean quadrinity, was defined in the 2nd century B.C. at the latest. If this is true, it follows that the action of Tōsar and, *a fortiori*, that of Kardēr with its emphasis on the doctrine of heaven and hell, i.e. on ethics and retribution, did not represent anything new but simply took up again the task undertaken several centuries before by some unknown religious or political leaders of the Arsacid period. To what extent the belief in Zurvān, the god beyond good and evil, and

[1] See p. 868.
[2] Zaehner, *Zurvan*, pp. 197ff.

the cult of demons succeeded in their competition with Mazdaism among the people it is impossible to estimate. On the other hand, Mazdaism was not restricted to the cult of Mazda and the beneficent Immortals: this can be deduced from the names of the months and days, as well as from the coins, crowns and reliefs of the Sasanian kings.

Major deities

Ohrmazd was of course the chief god, whom all the kings professed to worship. He is represented on the reliefs of Ardashīr at Naqsh-i Rajab, Naqsh-i Rustam, etc. He gives the ring of investiture to Shāpūr I as well as to Varhrān I, Varhrān II, Narseh, Ohrmazd II and Ardashīr II. Kardēr is made magupat of Ohrmazd by Ohrmazd-Ardashīr, and, after the latter's coronation, Ohrmazd supersedes Mithra and Anāhitā as giver of investiture. Varhrān IV, in his crown, imitates that of Ohrmazd. Ohrmazd's name (under the form Urmaysde) in the Saka language of Khotan means the sun.[1] This may be explained in two ways: either Ohrmazd underwent the same treatment as the Amahrspands in Manichaeism, where they are reduced to "elements of light", or else, the sun-god assumed such preeminence that he eventually took the name of the sky-god. The second hypothesis is the more plausible, seeing the importance of the solar cult with the Saka-Kushāns, who carried it as far as India.[2] We may note that under the reign of Shāpūr I (in the dipinti of Dura-Europos) the name Yazdān, a probable designation of Ohrmazd, appears in a personal name, Yazdān-tuxm, literally "Issue of Yazdān".

Mihr invests Ohrmazd I, Varhrān II, Ohrmazd II and Ardashīr II. Varhrān I copies Mihr's crown. No Sasanian bears the name of Mihr, perhaps merely so as to be different from the Arsacids. But a great minister was called Mihr-Narseh; an intaglio belonging to a certain Humihr shows a radiate Mihr climbing on a chariot.[3] The god with the chariot is again found on a piece of material of Sasanian type.[4] Mihr gives his name to the great feast of Mihragān, and to the Burzēn Mihr fire. In Sogdiana he seems to have been replaced by Baga, an ancient companion of his.[5]

[1] Hence, with the Turks and Mongols, Khormuzta denotes Indra, whereas Brahma is called Äzruä.

[2] Cf. also the proper name Mitroharmazde; F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (Marburg, 1895), p. 216; I. Scheftelowitz, "Die Mithra-Religion der Indoskythen", *AO* XI (1933), p. 296.

[3] *SPA*, pl. 255 E.

[4] Musée du Cinquantenaire, Brussels; Christensen, p. 145.

[5] W. B. Henning, "A Sogdian god", *BSOAS* XXVIII (1965), pp. 242–54; Duchesne-Guillemin "L'expansion de Baga".

Anāhitā had a temple at Stakhr which was served by Pāpak and by Ardashīr and his successors, probably until Varhrān II. She invested Shāpūr I, Ohrmazd-Ardashīr, Varhrān I and II, Narseh on the Naqsh-i Rustam relief, Varhrān IV, and Pērōz. A fire was dedicated "to the waters", meaning probably Anāhitā, under Shāpūr II. Shāpūr III's crown imitates hers. It was in her temple at Stakhr that the last Sasanian king was elected.

These three deities are identical with those the authors of the *Acta Sanctorum* had in mind[1] when saying that Shāpūr II ordered the Christians to worship Jupiter, Apollo, and Diana.

The name Varhrān was borne by several kings. From the second of these kings, the pair of wings symbolizing the winged incarnation of Vərəθraγna figures on some crowns, notably on Varhrān IV's. Shāpūr II in battle wore instead of his crown a ram's head, another symbol of Varhrān. "Varhrān" is also the generic name of the principal fires. Shāpūr I and later Kardēr founded several of them. Perhaps it is the Varhrān fire that is denoted by the throne-altar seen on the reverse of certain coins, and by the head in the altar flames on others. It seems likely that Varhrān is frequently represented on intaglios by one or other of his avatars.[2] Of the many representations of the altar there is one clearly relating to the Varhrān fire, namely, the intaglio in the University Museum of Philadelphia which shows a great bird on the altar;[3] this is a falcon, the bird of Varhrān. The temple of Mars at Jerusalem in the time of Khusrau II, mentioned in the *Acta Sanctorum* is almost certainly a Varhrān fire.[4]

These four, most frequently attested gods, Ohrmazd, Mihr, Anāhitā, and Varhrān, correspond almost exactly to the four worshipped in Commagene, and the only divergence between the two pantheons is more apparent than real if we allow that "my all-nurturing country Commagene" is merely a local expression of fecundity, therefore a substitute for Anāhitā. There is then a remarkable continuity in the Iranian pantheon.

Other gods are less richly represented. The name of the fire appears on Kushān coins and in a host of proper names. That of the "royal glory", Xwarr or Farn, also appears on Kushān coins, and in the name of one of the great fires of the empire, Farnbāg, besides occurring in personal names. To Šaoreoro, attested on Kushān coins, seems to correspond to the worship of metals (of which Šaθrēvar is the patron)

[1] Gray, "Zoroastrian material in the Acta Sanctorum", p. 44.
[2] *SPA*, pp. 791ff. (on p. 793 read pl. 253 D). [3] *SPA*, pl. 255 T.
[4] Gray, p. 45.

mentioned in the "Acts of Anastasis".[1] Drvāspā, the ancient goddess of horses, has become, with the Kushāns, a male deity, Lrooaspo. Narseh gives his name to a king and, combined with Mihr's, to a celebrated minister. Zurvān figures only in the name borne by one of this minister's sons, Zurvāndād. Many of these gods owed much of their importance to their presence in the calendar and especially to the festivals.[2]

Fires and priests

Every Zoroastrian in the course of his life had frequently to do with priests, for instance for ceremonies of purification of the second degree, or *nahn*, performed at the wedding, after childbirth, and in the last ten days of the year, or for general ceremonies ordered not only at death, but also on several occasions in memory of the departed. The chief ceremony, often though not exclusively performed for the benefit of the dead, was, of course, the yasna or sacrifice before the fire. The sponsoring of such a ceremony sometimes took the form of a "foundation for the soul"; an endowment was made, so that its revenues would pay for the rites, just as in the Roman Catholic Church masses are founded. The fire itself was in the hereditary possession of a given family. It could not be alienated. Its transformation was assured by the successoral laws, as seen in the *Mātigān-i hazār Dātastān*.[3] Nay more, a fire enjoyed a kind of autonomous personality, being entitled to possess, receive gifts, etc.

These foundations contributed to the maintenance of the priests, who had also other sources of revenue. They received fees (*nirmat*) for every religious service performed, either at home or in the fire-temple. A term is attested in the *Mātigān*,[4] designating the tax for the maintenance of the fire: *'psyk* and its derivative *'psykwmnd*, a functionary entrusted with the collection of this tax. It is probable that cognate terms in Parthian of Nisā, *ptsyk* and *'wpsyk*, designated, as Diakonov and Livshits infer, a similar tax for the maintenance of the fire-temple. There is no archaeological evidence of fire-temples, but their existence can be inferred from such a term as *'twršpty* and from the calendar. The priests also took fines, at confession, for sins avowed, according to a fixed scale[5] in

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 41. [2] See above, pp. 801ff, 814f.

[3] de Menasce, *Feux et fondations pieuses*, pp. 7ff with the important commentaries of M. Boyce, "On the sacred fires of the Zoroastrians", *BSOAS* xxxi (1968), pp. 52–68, 287–9, and "The pious foundations of the Zoroastrians", *ibid.*, pp. 270–87.

[4] A. Perikhanian in Diakonov and Livshitz, "Novie Naxodki", p. 139, n. 10.

[5] *Šāyast-nē-šāyast*, 8, 13c; cf. Tavadia's edition, pp. 13ff.

which eight degrees of sin – and of atonement – were distinguished. Payment might be made in money or in kind. It was an optional substitute for corporal punishment, but the latter is still mentioned in Kardēr's inscriptions. Very likely offerings were made to the shrines on the occasion of festivals, pilgrimages, etc. The property of a priest could be confiscated in case of heresy (*Mātigān*, 42, 47).

The texts describing the fire-ritual appear to be both obscure and contradictory.[1] The *Rivāyat* of Kāmdīn Shāpūr states that the flame alone is to be carried to a fire of higher grade, and from there to the fire of the first grade or Bahrām fire; exactly, Tavadia remarks, as the purified soul, and not the body, proceeds to the Endless Lights. Collecting the flame in this way is analogous to the processes leading to the establishment of a new fire. But on the other hand, the Pahlavī *Rivāyat* states that: "Once the fire has been used and the work is over, it should be collected. A flame should be taken from it and conveyed elsewhere, and the remainder (*aparīk*) should be carried to the brands of the Varhrān fire." It is obvious from this more ancient text that it is not the flame, but on the contrary the "remainder" or incandescent embers, which is carried away. How can this difference between the texts be explained?

Tavadia was so embarrassed by this that he hesitated to offer his version of the Persian *Rivāyat*. I wonder whether in fact this text did not combine two traditions and confuse two rites, which it behoves us to distinguish one from the other. The first is the purification of a fire by refining it. The flame alone is carried away and united with similar ones, in order to establish a superior fire. This is the rite developed by the Parsees. The second is a regeneration of the fire, by carrying the used fire (i.e. the incandescent brands without flame) to a fire of a superior grade already in existence. The fire is thus brought back to its origin and to its master, so as to have its strength restored. Tavadia writes,[2] "the original idea was that the fire is the one and only master that tolerates no rival. That is why only a cooled fire can be brought to the superior fire; a blazing fire would give it umbrage." This recalls the custom observed practically the world over of renewing the fires at the New Year and probably, for the rite to have had its full significance, it must have concluded with the return of the superior fire, or part of it, to the hearth from which it came. However, this rite is no longer observed by the Parsees. But it appears to have been of great importance under the Sasanians. We can guess what a vital rôle it must have played

[1] J. C. Tavadia, "Ein alter Feuerritus bei den Zoroastriern in Iran", *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* XXXVI (Leipzig, 1939), pp. 256ff. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 263.

then, for it reaffirmed by a frequently repeated symbolic action the allegiance owed by the household fires to those of the village, and by the village fires to those of the provinces, and so on, up the whole political pyramid. It is by no means fortuitous that in the Pahlavī and Persian *Rivāyat*s the superior fire is generally the Varhrān (Bahrām) fire, that is to say, the king of fires.

It is understandable that when the Parsees went into exile, they gave up this rite, together with the political organization it symbolized. Later in the 18th century, when relations with Iran were resumed, the Qadīmīs tried to re-establish its practice. But by this time the rite of regeneration had long (at least since the time of Kāmdīn Shāpūr, 1559) become confused, as we have seen, with the rite of purification by refinement.

In Sasanian times, the political importance of the fires was emphasized by the image of the fire-altar on the coins. By looking at the two sides of these, a Mazdean really saw two aspects of one reality, since the fire was the king's own, a symbol of his living soul, and since, conversely, the king represented the supreme religious authority.

What part did the faithful take in the fire-ritual? Perhaps they did little more than join others streaming past the fire along the corridor surrounding the fire chamber. However, the new type of shrine initiated in the Sasanian period, the *chahār tāq* poses a problem. As Schippmann writes,[1] "why is the rite, which in Achaemenian and Parthian times took place in more or less closed spaces, now in a large measure performed under the chahār tāq and visible from afar?" This is one of the many subjects which remain to be investigated concerning the Iranian religion in the Parthian and Sasanian periods.

[1] K. Schippmann, "Die Entwicklung des iranischen Feuerheiligtums", in *XVII Deutscher Orientalistentag 1968* (*ZDMG* Supplement I. 3, 1969), pp. 1021–31.

APPENDIX

NOTE ON THE RELIGIOUS SECTS MENTIONED BY KARTĪR (KARDĒR)[1]

Professor Sir Harold Bailey writes:

Kartīr in his inscription at the Kaʿba-yi Zardušt, line 10, reported his actions against sectarians: *yhwdy*, *šmny*, *blmny*, *n'sl'y*, *klystd'n*, *mktky*, *zndyky*. Of these well-known are: *yahūd* "Jew", *šaman* "Buddhist", *braman* "Brahman" and *kristiyān* "Christian". Not immediately recognized were the three other names. The Mandaeans called (and call) themselves *Naṣorāy* (< *naṣar* "to observe rules"), but the name tends to be similar to the Christian name Nazarene (as in Christian Sogdian *n'čr'yq'* **nāṣarīqā* in the George Passion). The *zandīk* is familiar in the Armenian of Eznik set beside the Magian. It was at first a wide name for deviant believers with their own *zand* "interpretation" (*zand*, older *zanti-* "knowledge", not from *zand* "incantation", Avestan *zanda-*, Sogdian *zand* "sing"). It could be used of Mani's followers and then possibly so here, since their leader was executed in A.D. 276, while Kartīr flourished earlier in the time of Shāpūr I, who reigned 241–272. The *zandīkīh* "teaching of the *zandīk*" was denounced in later Zoroastrian books and as *zindīq* occupied the Islamic establishment in persecution and refutation. The final name *mktky* **makatáka-* has hitherto defied explanation. However, the missing sect is certainly the wide-spread sect of baptists, now copiously documented in the papyrus codex of Manikhaios (Mani), distinct from the Mandaeans (also a baptist sect, in Mēšōn, Mesēnē). For "baptist" the Parthian of Turfan used *'bšwdg'an* **aβšōδayān*, and the later Muslim writers had *al-mughtasila* "washers".

The Iranian base *mak-*, used variously in connection with immersion in water, has here the form *makata-* "washing, dipping", and hence equivalent in meaning to Greek βαπτίζω "dip" and βαπτισταί "immerser, baptist", and Aramaic (west) *ṣbʿ* and (east) *ʿmd*. From Aramaic *ṣbʿ*, with *alif* in place of the foreign Aramaic *ʿain*, Arabic has made *ṣābi'ūn* and Greek Σοβίαι; the base still gives the name *Ṣubba* to the modern Mandaeans. The suffix *-ata-* is archaic Indo-Iranian: Avestan *yazata-* "worshipped", Khotan Saka *jasta-*, Tumšuq *jezda-*, Ossetic *izäd*, Old Indian *yajatá-*, Old Persian *gmata-* "come", Avestan *γəmata-*. A similar form *makata-* from a second, different base *mak-* "move fast, jump" resulted in the word for "frog" in Yazgulāmī *magūd*, Wakhī *mukt*, Sanglēčī *moγdōk*, Tājīkī *muqdoq* (like Old Indian *plava-* "jumper" for "frog"). To the base *mak-* with its connection with water belongs Khotan Saka *maṇḍe* "woman", as giving suck, from **makantiyā-*, and *mattūna-* rendering Buddhist Sanskrit *pūta-* "of putrid breath" from **maxtauna-*. Important too is the form with the variant suffix *-r̥-ta-* (as in Iranian **kamr̥ta-*, **čamr̥ta-* "basket" from *kam-* "to carry", see s.v. *khamūḍa-* in the *Dictionary of Khotan Saka*), that is, **makr̥ta-* preserved in the Parthian load-word in Armenian *mkrta-* in *mkrta-ran* **makr̥ta-dāna-* "baptismal font" and

mkrta-toun "baptistery" (*toun* "house"), and the verb *mkrtem* with older spellings *məkərtem*, *mkrətem* (of washing hands) "to dip"; (of religious immersion) "to baptise", whence the familiar *Yovhannēs mkrtič'* "John the Baptist". Here too comes in New Persian *makīdan* "to suck".

The base *mak-* is familiar in Baltic Lithuanian *makõnė* "pool", Slavonic *mokrŭ* "wet", *močiti* "to moisten" and Albanian *makë* "mud". In the indigenous Armenian where old *-k-* passed to *-k'-* there is *mak'our* "clean" as if "washed".

Earlier attempts to explain *mktky* have proposed to change the spelling to give **mntk-* to make "Mantaean", or to give *mnqd-* to make Syriac *mnqdē* "purifiers", or to suppose *-kt-* to give the equivalent of Old Indian *mukti-* "release" (Iranian *-xt-* replaced older *-kt-*).

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For *mak-* "of swift movement", see H. W. Bailey, "Atharva-veda *mákaka-*", in J. Ensink and G. Gaeffke (eds), *India Major: Congratulatory Volume presented to J. Gonda* (Leiden, 1972), pp. 41–5.

CHAPTER 24

JEWS IN IRAN

JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN THE WESTERN SATRAPIES OF IRAN

Jews settled in the Tigris–Euphrates river system long before the region fell under the rule of Iranian governments, and they remained long afterward. The first community consisted of the upper classes of northern Israel, exiled in 722 B.C. to "Ḥālah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan" (2 Kings 17.6, 18.11), the Khābūr river area, around Nisibis. Jewish settlement in the same territory is well attested in the 1st century A.D. and afterward, and it stands to reason that the later community derived from the earlier one, although the passage of six hundred years and the formation of legends about the "ten lost tribes of Israel" do little to illuminate what happened in between.[1] The second, and far more important settlement, in central Babylonia along the rivers and the Royal Canal, followed the destruction of the first Temple, in 587 B.C. In addition to the two larger communities we know about smaller ones from Armenia to the Persian Gulf, north-eastward to the Caspian, eastward to Media, and, in later Sasanian times, in Fārs as well. But outside of central Babylonia, the Jews left no substantial records. In most instances our evidence about the location of Jews in various places is episodic and random.[2] Jews did not constitute a majority in any one city, although in central Babylonia some villages were mainly, even exclusively, composed of Jews. In the mosaic of

[1] Schürer, II/ii, 223–5; Josephus, *Antiquities* XI. 5. 2, 131–3. For indigenous Mesopotamian legends on the "ten tribes", Asahel Grant, *The Nestorians* (New York, 1841), pp. 153ff.

[2] For Armenia: Neusner, *History* (henceforth cited as *History*) III, 339–53. For Adiabene: *History* I, 61–7, and *History* III, 354–8. For Persia proper: *History* V, 8–14. For Mesene: Graetz, *Das Königreich Mesene*. For Nippur: J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Philadelphia, 1913). For Jewry and Judaism in Dura-Europos: C. H. Kraeling, "The Synagogue", in A. R. Bellinger *et al.* (eds), *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Final Report* VIII/1 (New Haven, Conn., 1956), 321–40; E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period: IX. Symbolism in the Dura Synagogue* (New York, 1964), IX–XI, IX, 3–24; E. J. Bickerman, "Symbolism in the Dura Synagogue", *Harvard Theological Review* LVIII/1 (1965), 127–52; and Morton Smith, "Goodenough's Jewish Symbols in Retrospect", *Journal of Biblical Literature* LXXXVI/1 (Boston, 1967), 53–68. For Hyrcania: *History* I, 11ff. For a brief account of the whole: Juster I, 199–203; Widengren, "The Status", pp. 117–62. For the geography of Babylonian Jewry the definitive work is Obermeyer, *Die Landschaft Babylonien*.

peoples and cultures in the western satrapies of Iran Jewry did not constitute a dominant or important element. Brought by force, Jews remained by choice in a cosmopolitan land of varied cultures, rich natural advantages and relatively stable governments.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN SELEUCID, PARTHIAN AND SASANIAN TIMES

The relationships between Jewry and the successive imperial governments from the Achaemenians to the eve of the Arab conquest generally proved cordial. Exceptions to that rule came when religious enthusiasm led the Iranian government to harass the non-Zoroastrian minorities, as in early Sasanian times, or motivated Jewry to upset the status quo, as in the late 5th century A.D. In the breakdown of stable government under Khusrau II Jewry suffered along with the rest of the population. But in ordinary times the Jews were left pretty much alone, so long as they paid taxes and did not subvert the régime.

Seleucids

Alexander's conquest, so far as we know, did not elicit much reaction from Babylonian Jewry. Afterward Jews remained loyal to the Seleucid government. Josephus reports that Antiochus the Great at the end of the 3rd century B.C. sent two thousand Jewish families from Mesopotamia and Babylonia to Lydia and Phrygia to assist in the pacification of rebellious lands.[1] Jews furthermore cooperated in the defence of Babylonia, though it is not certain in which war.[2] More strikingly still, the Seleucids gave Babylonian Jews no reason to support the Maccabean revolt.[3] The picture is sparse, but leaves the impression of good relations between Jewry and the Seleucid régime.

Parthians

The conditions of the Parthians' conquest of Babylonia determined their later relationship with the peoples of the satrapy. The Greek cities were not besieged and overthrown, but entered into honourable, con-

[1] Josephus, *Antiquities* XII. 147–53; V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1959), p. 288.

[2] 2 Maccabees 8. 20; F. M. Abel, *Les Livres des Maccabées* (Paris, 1949), p. 391.

[3] E. Bickerman, *Der Gott der Makkabäer* (Berlin, 1937), p. 121; A. Bouché-LeClercq, *Histoire des Séleucides* (Paris, 1913), p. 264.

tractual agreements with the new rulers. As to the Jews, we have no information on Parthian and Babylonian and Mesopotamian Jewish relations before the 1st century A.D. On the other hand, Parthian inheritance of eastern Seleucid lands and the achievement of independence by Palestinian Jewry reciprocally aided one another and produced a common interest among the two peoples. A "Persian" embassy referred to in connection with the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (104–78 B.C.) may have had some connection with the threat posed to both the Near and the Middle East by the rise of Tigranes I the Great of Armenia.[1] Tigranes exiled some Palestinian Jews to Armenia. In 41–39 B.C., the Parthians conquered Palestine and deposed the Roman ally, Hyrcanus, setting in his place a pro-Parthian Maccabean scion. By 37, the Parthians withdrew, but they left behind a favourable memory, which produced the expectation that when a "Persian" horseman would again tie his horse in a Palestinian graveyard, the Messiah would come.[2] For Babylonian and Mesopotamian Jewry, these facts produce the presumption of favourable ties with the new régime. The Parthians had no interest in changing the inherited religious pattern of the conquered peoples or even in upsetting the traditional pattern of economic and autonomous political life. Jewry for its part did not aspire to greater privileges than it already enjoyed. Because of its Palestinian adventure the Parthian government became aware of the potential usefulness of Jewry on both sides of the international frontier.[3]

Josephus reports that some time before 6 B.C., a Babylonian Jewish noble, Zamaris, fled to Palestine with a troop of five hundred horsemen.[4] The soldiers were able "to shoot their arrows as they rode on horseback", perhaps a reference to the Parthian shot. Herod appreciated their value and settled them on the north-east marches of his kingdom. Zamaris fled for local political motives, not because of a persecution of the Jews. The story suggests that some Babylonian Jews had achieved a more than minor place within the feudal régime. Josephus tells the story of Anileus and Asineus, Jewish weavers who led a revolt and from A.D. 20 to 35 took control of territories around

[1] Palestinian Talmud (henceforth y.) Berakhot 7. 2 and Nazir 5. 3; N. C. Debevoise, *Political History of Parthia* (Chicago, 1938), pp. 94–5; *History* I, 24–7.

[2] Josephus, *Antiquities* XIV. 119–21; Debevoise, p. 95; *History* I, 28–31. For the Messianic rôle of "Persia", Simeon b. Yoḥai, Lamentations Rabbati I. 13, Song of Songs Rabbah 8. 10; Babylonian Talmud (henceforth b.), Sanhedrin 98a; J. Klausner, *Messianic Idea in Israel* (New York, 1955), pp. 277, 297, 432–4.

[3] *History* I, 31–3.

[4] Josephus, *Antiquities* XVII. 23–7; Debevoise, pp. 145–6; *History* I, 41–4.

Nehardea, a town with a large Jewish population. They met several Parthian armies and held their own, but in the end were overcome.[1] Shortly thereafter, the Adiabenian royal family converted to Judaism.[2] In the difficult times before Vologases re-established a strong government, Jews in Babylonia and Adiabene played an important rôle in the dynastic wars. Their location in the crucial territories around the capital and the presence of a large community across the frontier lent them greater importance than they would otherwise have enjoyed.

Anti-Roman elements in Palestine favoured the Parthians and hoped for their support in the war of 66–75 and thereafter.[3] Some Jews fought against Rome at times advantageous to Parthian interests, in 114–17, 160–5 and 193–9.[4] In particular, Jewish uprisings in Cyprus, Egypt and Cyrenaica in 115 seriously threatened Trajan at the time of his Parthian war. In 116, after he reached Ctesiphon, Mesopotamian Jews to his rear revolted.[5] We have a story that Ardavān sent a gift to Judah, the Patriarch of Jewish Palestine, *c.* 220.[6] The attitude of Babylonian Jewry to Parthian rule is best revealed by the comment of Rav, an important master, when it came to an end: "Antoninus served Rabbi [Judah the Prince]. Ardavān served Rav. When Antoninus died, Rabbi lamented, 'The bond is snapped.' When Ardavān died, Rav lamented, 'The bond is snapped.'"[7] This and similar sayings leave no doubt whatever that both Palestinian and Babylonian Jewry had a favourable opinion of Parthian rule and regretted its end.[8]

In Parthian times, some high officials of both Palestinian and Babylonian Jewry participated in the international silk trade. The Babylonians included Ḥiyya the Elder, Abba the father of Samuel, Judah b. Bathyra of Nisibis, and others; the first named was probably related to, and a Palestinian representative of, the Babylonian exilarch (see below). Among the Palestinians was R. Simeon the son of R. Judah. Babylonia was the western entrepôt of silk from China; the thread was woven and manufactured into clothing for the Roman market in Palestine and Syria. Jews, represented on both sides of the frontier, were in a favourable position to profit from the trade. So, in particular, were the repre-

[1] Josephus, *Antiquities* XVIII. 310–79; Eugen Täubler, *Die Parthernachrichten bei Josephus* (Berlin, 1904), pp. 62–3; Debevoise, pp. 155–6; A. von Gutschmid, *Kleine Schriften* III (Leipzig, 1879), 53–5; *History* I, 54–61. [See also pp. 69ff in this vol.]

[2] Josephus, *Antiquities* XX. 17–37, 54; *History* I, 61–7.

[3] *History* I, 67–70.

[4] *History* I, 74–88.

[5] Juster II, 182–9; *History* I, 76–9.

[6] y. Pe'ah I. 1; *History* I, 88–94.

[7] b. 'Avodah Zarah 10b–11a; *History* II, 27–9.

[8] See b. Yevamot 63b; b. Giṭṭin 17a. (But this probably refers to Kartir's times.)

sentatives of the Jewish administrations established by the respective imperial régimes. Since the silk trade was closely supervised by the Parthian government, it stands to reason that the Jewish participants were encouraged by the government, which found them an efficient means of carrying on the international exchange.[1]

We furthermore have some stories about Jewish officials bearing Parthian names, Arda, Arta, and Pyl-y Barish ("elephant-rider"), who had a mounted retinue of troops and wore "high hats" (*xōd*?). These Jews, obviously "iranized" nobles, were, according to the story, well informed about Jewish law. In the Dura synagogue are mentioned the names Arsaces and Artav. Some Jews thus enjoyed close political and cultural relations with the Arsacid régime, just as in Seleucid times we hear of a few Babylonian Jews bearing Greek names.[2] Babylonian and Mesopotamian Jewry therefore could not have been uniformly attached to the indigenous Aramaic-speaking culture of the villages, though it is likely that the larger number stood outside the ambience of imperial culture, whether Greek or Iranian.

Sasanians

If four centuries of benign Arsacid rule had won the friendship of Jewry, as of other minority communities, the behaviour of the Sasanians in the first decades of their rule intensified the Jews' dismay at the change of dynasties. The Sasanians' politics, founded upon the conviction that they were destined to foster the predominance of the religion and cult of ancient Iran, boded ill for the minority communities. Furthermore, while the Parthians had considerable experience in ruling culturally heterogeneous territories, the Sasanians did not. For a while, therefore, they supposed they could convert non-Mazdeans to the cult of Ohrmazd and Anahita. The new régime first of all annulled the Jews' right to govern their own affairs.[3] Since few distinguished between religion and law, this was tantamount to revoking the licit status of Judaism. The Jewish authorities responded ineptly; they at first hoped to hoodwink the Sasanian bureaucracy and to keep the Jews

[1] Genesis Rabbah 77. 2, Midrash Samuel 10. 3; W. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents* (London, 1864), p. 14, 1. 21; F. M. Heichelheim, "Roman Syria", in Tenney Frank (ed.), *An Economic History of Ancient Rome* IV (Baltimore, 1938), 121–258; and *History* I, 94–9.

[2] Hellenized Jews: *History* I, 10–11. Iranized Jews: b. Giṭṭin 14a–b; y. Qiddushin 3. 4, Giṭṭin 1. 5; Kraeling, "The Synagogue", p. 278, pl. XXV; *History* I, 100–3. "Elephant-rider": I. Gershevitch, quoted in *History* I, 101n2. *Xōd*: *History* I, 102n1.

[3] b. Bava' Qamma' 117a; b. Berakhot 58a; *History* II, 27–35.

in line by force. For their part, the *mobads* decreed against ritual bathing, exhuming the dead, limited the right to use fire in Jewish worship and destroyed synagogues. Unlike the Parthians, the Sasanians made no use of Jews in their foreign policy.[1] But the Jews suffered far more on account of the Palmyrene invasion of Babylonia and destruction of Nehardea, in 261, than because of anything the Sasanian government did to them.[2] In the end Shāpūr I and the Jewish master, Samuel, worked out a modus vivendi. Samuel decreed that the law of the Iranian government was law for Jewry, which meant that Persian law would be respected in Jewish courts, Persian taxes would be paid, Persian rules on land tenure would be observed and all bills and documents drawn up in Persian courts would be accepted in the Jewish ones.[3] When, in 260–1, Samuel was informed that King Shāpūr had killed twelve thousand Jews in the siege of Caesarea–Mazaca, he did not rend his clothing, for "There they had brought it upon themselves."[4] Confronted by such loyalty, the Persian government no longer needed to subject the Jewish administration to close supervision. The Jews enjoyed the same tolerated status as was extended by Shāpūr to other minorities.

Since Kartir's inscription alleges that he "opposed" Jews, among others, one should expect to find in Jewish sources evidence of persecutions after Shāpūr's death.[5] Evidence about the severe treatment of Christians and Manichaeans, however, has no counterpart in the Babylonian Talmud. One story relates that a Magus came and removed a lamp from a rabbi's house.[6] It is possible that Magi burned or desecrated Torah-scrolls. Rav Judah, a contemporary of Kartir, stated that it was a blessing that "no heads of canals or chiliarchs were appointed from among the Jews".[7] Later on we find some generalized references to the willingness of Jews in Rav Judah's generation to give their lives for the faith, but no stories tell that anyone actually did so.[8] We find no complaints about the destruction of synagogues or the prohibition of the practice of Judaism. Of those "opposed" by Kartir, it seems the Jews suffered least of all. The problems of Kartir's times passed at the end of the reign of the Bahrāms, and no equivalent difficulties affected Jewry for nearly two centuries. The minority of Shāpūr II produced

[1] b. Yevamot 63b; b. Shabbat 45a; b. Giṭṭin 17a; b. Yoma 10a; *History* II, 35–9.
[2] *History* II, 39–52.
[3] b. Bava' Batra' 54b; b. Giṭṭin 88b; b. Nedarim 28a; b. Bava Meṣi 'a' 108a; Funk, *Juden*, 57, 70–1; *History* II, 64–72.
[4] b. Mo'ed Qatan 26a.
[5] *History* III, 8–29.
[6] b. Giṭṭin 16b.
[7] b. Ta'anit 20a.
[8] b. Berakhot 20a.

unsteady times in Babylonia, on account of the incursion of desert marauders, but these passed when the new emperor took control.[1] The rabbis told stories about how the mother of Shāpūr sent gifts to rabbis and counselled her son to favour them, "for whatever they ask of their Master, he gives them".[2] Such stories indicate that rabbis believed they had a friend at court and held a favourable view of the government. Since the Jews paid their taxes at a time (*c.* A.D. 339) that the Christians did not, and further supported the government's wars against Rome, it is not surprising that the government should have left them alone.[3] In Julian's invasion of 363, the Romans levelled a Jewish village, and the ravages of central Babylonia affected Jews among the rest of the population.[4] On the other hand, when some Jews followed a Messiah who claimed Julian's rebuilding of the Temple marked the time to return to Palestine, Shāpūr's troops massacred "many thousand of them".[5] Shāpūr II settled Armenian Jews in Persia.[6]

Yazdgard I was regarded by both Iranian and Talmudic sources as a friend of the Jews. He was supposedly married to the daughter of the exilarch, and while this is unlikely, he seems to have fostered Jewish settlement in Iṣfahān and elsewhere in Iran proper.[7] Talmudic stories have Yazdgard treating rabbis with special courtesy and citing scripture to them.[8] R. Ashi, the leading rabbinical authority of the time, ruled that while one may not normally sell iron to pagans, it is permissible to sell it to the Persians, "who protect us".[9]

Yazdgard II and Pērōz revised the established policy of toleration of Judaism. Rabbinic sources from post-Sasanian times report that in 455 Yazdgard decreed the abrogation of the Sabbath, and in 467–8, closed all the Jews' schools and executed rabbis and the exilarch. Ḥamza Iṣfahānī tells how in 468 the Jews of Iṣfahān flayed two Magi alive, and consequently half the Jewish population of the town was slaughtered and the children were handed over to the local fire temple. While

[1] *History* IV, 1–17, 44–5.
[2] b. Ta'anit 24b; also b. Bava' Batra' 8a–b, 10a–11a, b. Zevaḥim 116b, b. Niddah 20b *History* IV, 34–9.
[3] Taxes: *History* IV, 39–44; wars: *ibid.* pp. 44–9.
[4] Ammianus Marcellinus, tr. J. C. Rolfe, XXIV. 4. 1; Obermeyer, *Landschaft*, p. 219; A. Musil, *The Middle Euphrates* (New York, 1927), p. 241, on the siege of Maiozamalcha.
[5] O. Braun, *Ausgewählte Akten persischer Märtyrer* (Munich, 1915), pp. 13–15; Widengren, "Status", p. 133n2; *History* IV, 32–4.
[6] *History* III, 339–53.
[7] J. Markwart, *The Provincial Capitals of Eranšahr* (Rome, 1931), pp. 19, 96–8; *idem.*, *Ērānšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenac'i* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 20, 52n1; Widengren, "Status", p. 120; *History* V, 8–14.
[8] b. Ketuvot 61a–b; b. *Zevaḥim* 19a; *History* V, 11–14.
[9] b. 'Avodah Zarah 16a.

Jewish and Christian traditions explain the persecution of Christianity and Judaism as motivated by Iranian religious fanaticism, the Iranian account has the Jews mistreating Magi. If the Magi with the government worked to extirpate Judaism after nearly three centuries of toleration, it seems reasonable to look for a cause for the striking change in traditional policies. The cause may have been the Jews' expectation that the Messiah would come four hundred years after the destruction of the Temple (dated by the rabbis in A.D. 68, hence 468). We know that the Christians mistreated Magi and burned fire temples when, in the aftermath of Yazdgard I's edict of toleration, they expected the state to become Christian. It may be that for similar reasons the Jews did what later Iranian traditions of Iṣfahān claimed. Even Shāpūr II, who had reason to respect the Jews, was compelled to send troops to massacre Jewish messianists. Now the Jewish régime, not merely a few enthusiasts, was apparently implicated in a similar movement. The state before 468 instituted some unprecedented prohibitions of Jewish religious practices in a wide-ranging repression of minority religions; the Jews then presumed these were preliminary to the coming of the Messiah and so acted much as the Iṣfahān tradition claims. The government finally took stern measures to suppress Jewish self-government and to prohibit the practice of Judaism.[1] The stories about an "independent Jewish state" in the time of Kavād and the Mazdakites are late, unverifiable and incredible. They probably represent a medieval rendition of the events preserved in connection with Yazdgard and Pērōz.[2] Kavad was supported by the Jews of Tella in his siege in 502–3, and Jews fought in his army against Belisarius in 531.[3] Bahrām VI Chobin enjoyed Jewish support in his struggle with Khusrau II. Khusrau's general, Mahbod, slaughtered many Jews on that account.[4] Still

[1] Decree against Sabbath: *Letter of* R. *Sherira Gaon*, ed. B. M. Lewin (Haifa, 1921), pp. 94–5; closing of schools and slaughter of exilarch and rabbis: *Seder Tannaim veAmoraim*, ed. M. Grosberg (London, 1910), p. 65; interrogation of rabbis by Magi: *Seder Eliahu Rabbah*, ed. M. Friedmann (repr. Jerusalem, 1960), pp. 5–6; flaying of Magi: Ḥamza Iṣfahānī II, ed. J. M. E. Gottwaldt (Leipzig, 1848), 41, and Widengren, "Status", p. 143; Messianic expectations: b. 'Avodah Zarah 9b and *History* v, 60–9.

[2] *Seder 'Olam Zuṭa*, ed. Felix Lazarus, in "Die Häupter der Vertriebenen", pp. 166–8; O. Klima, "Mazdak und die Juden", *ArOr* xxiv (1956), 420–31, n. 10; Funk, *Juden*, pp. 143–5; Widengren, "Status", pp. 144–5; *History* v, 95–105.

[3] Tella: *Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*, tr. W. Wright (Cambridge, 1882), pp. 47–8, and Widengren, "Status", p. 145; campaign of 531: *Zachariah of Mitylene*, *Chronicle*, tr. E. J. Hamilton and E. W. Brooks (London, 1899), pp. 225–6, and *History* v, 105–6.

[4] Immanuel Bekkerus (ed.), *Theophylacti Simocattae*, *Historiarum* (Bonn, 1834), p. 218; Widengren, "Status", pp. 146–7; *History* v, 107–8.

another Babylonian Jew announced, in 640, that the Messiah had come. His followers burned churches, and the government troops slaughtered them and crucified their leader. The Arab conquerors received a warm welcome from the Jews.[1]

JEWISH AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT

We have no information on how Babylonian and Mesopotamian Jewry governed itself before later Parthian times. Medieval traditions trace the establishment of the office of the Babylonian exilarch, or *rēš gālūṯā*, to Jehoiachin (2 Kings 25.27). But accounts of Jewish life in the 1st century leave no ground to suppose an exilarch then functioned. Josephus' story of the state of Anileus and Asineus contains no reference to a state-sanctioned Jewish government. It is likely that the Parthian government established the exilarchate, as it became familiar later on, as part of its reorganization of Arsacid administration. Such an autonomous institution would both control the local community, preventing the outbreak of further revolts such as that of Asineus and Anileus, and mobilize Jewish support for Parthian foreign policy. Furthermore, the destruction of the Jewish Temple-government in Jerusalem in 70 and its replacement by the Roman-controlled patriarchate necessitated the reconsideration of Jewish administration at home. While the Parthians did not object to the influence of an autonomous Jerusalem régime of priests on the local community, they were hardly prepared to permit a Roman-supported group, such as was organized at Yavneh after 70, to have the like.[2]

The first clear evidence of the existence of the exilarch comes in the middle of the 2nd century A.D. Some Jewish authority certainly existed in *c.* A.D. 145 when R. Ḥananiah the nephew of R. Joshua b. Ḥananiah intercalated the calendar in Babylonia. The accounts of the intercalation contain the name of a local official, given variously as Aḥiah and Neḥunyon.[3] At about the same time, moreover, Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel rebuked R. Nathan, of Babylonia, for his part in a conspiracy against his own (R. Simeon's) rule, saying, "Granted that the sash of

[1] *History* v, 127–130. Messiah: Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, p. 280; T. Nöldeke, *Syrische Chronik* (Vienna, 1893), p. 36; François Nau, *Les Arabes chrétiens de Mésopotamie et de Syrie du VIIe au VIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1933), p. 45. Jewish messianism in Byzantium: A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, I (Oxford, 1964), 316–17.

[2] *History* I, 53–61, 103–21.

[3] Qohelet Rabbah 1. 8, 7. 26; b. Berakhot 63a; y. Sanhedrin 1. 2, Nedarim 6. 8; *History* I, 122–30.

office [*kamara*] of your father has indeed helped you to become head of the court, shall we therefore make you also *Nasi* [= president]?" Since the kamara, mentioned in various Iranian inscriptions, was one of the signs of office in Iran, it seems likely that R. Nathan was the son of the Jewish ruler of Babylonia.[1] The first Talmudic mention of the title of *rēš gālūtā*, however, occurs with reference to Huna the exilarch at the end of the 2nd century. R. Judah the Prince, the Palestinian patriarch, stated that if Huna were to come to Palestine, he would give precedence to him, for Huna was descended from the male line of the Davidic household, while he himself came from the female line.[2] We therefore are on firm ground in supposing that a Jewish government controlled by Ctesiphon did exist through the last century of Parthian rule in Babylonia.

The first rabbis came to Parthian territory as a direct consequence of the Bar Kokhba War which took place in A.D. 132–5. During the war and the consequent repressions, the students of R. Ishmael fled from Palestine to Huṣal, in central Babylonia, and some of those of R. ʿAqiba went to Nisibis in Mesopotamia. The latter returned to Palestine in time to participate in the consistory at Usha, in A.D. 145. The disciples of R. Ishmael stayed in Huṣal. They there educated the first native-born and -bred rabbis of Babylonia, in particular R. Aḥai the son of R. Josiah, and Issi b. Judah; other Babylonian Tannaim included a group from Kifri, R. Ḥiyya, Rav, Rabba b. Ḥana; and among the later figures were Ḥanina b. Ḥama and the Nehardeans, Abba b. Abba, father of Samuel, and Levi b. Sisi.[3]

The exilarch probably extended a warm welcome to Palestinian refugees, and certainly made use of rabbis in his courts and administration. As we have seen, Babylonian Jewry possessed a class of native-born aristocrats, who probably ruled as local strong-men. In attempting to create a central administration for the Jewish community, the exilarch found useful the disciplined, well-trained lawyers of the rabbinic movement, who were eager to enforce "the Torah" as they had learned it in Pharisaic traditions, and, unlike the Jewish nobility, utterly depended upon the exilarch for whatever power they might exercise.

Rabbinic opinion on the 3rd-century exilarchate was divided. In the early part of the century, the leading rabbis were subordinate to the exilarch. Rav was forced by him to set market prices, which, Rav held,

[1] b. Horayot 13b; *History* I, 79–86.
[2] y. Ketuvot 12. 3; y. Kila'yim 9. 3.
[3] *History* I, 122–77.

was not a proper function of the *agoranomos*, or market supervisor. Samuel deferred to the exilarch Mar'Uqba. The rabbis appealed to the people on the basis of their knowledge of the oral half of the Mosaic revelation, which, they held, was unique to their schools, and they moreover affirmed the exilarch's claim to Davidic origin. At the outset, therefore, the rabbinate and the exilarchate were closely allied against the centripetal forces of feudal autonomy represented by local Jewish strong-men, who were upper-class landholders.[1]

By the end of the 3rd century, however, tension developed between the exilarchate and certain rabbinical circles. The exilarch justified his rule over Jewry as an heir of the Davidic household, just as had the Maccabeans, Herodians, Jesus and all other Jews who claimed the right to govern "Israel". That claim did not depend upon study in the rabbinical academies or conformity to rabbinical rules. Whether or not the exilarch was a "good Jew" by rabbinic standards is ultimately irrelevant to the issue. The rabbis saw themselves as the sole bearers of Mosaic revelation in its complete, dual form. They alone possessed the oral Torah, which completed the written one and determined its interpretation. In *c.* 275, Geniva, a disciple of Rav, caused so much trouble for the exilarch that the latter besought the advice of the Palestinian R. Eleazar b. Pedat. He was counselled to be patient. Geniva was shortly thereafter executed by the state. We do not know what Geniva had done so to irritate the exilarch. The only clue to his doctrine is his teaching that rabbis should be called kings, proof-text for which was Proverbs 8. 31, "By me, kings rule." The eighth chapter of Proverbs was consistently interpreted by the rabbis as the message of the Torah personified. If by "me", meaning "Torah", kings rule, then those who are not qualified by "Torah", e.g. the exilarch and his staff, should subordinate themselves to those who are, namely the rabbis. If Geniva had made such an assertion of rabbinical superiority, the exilarch would wisely have handed him over to the Sasanians, for subversion of the exilarch was subversion, likewise, of the Sasanian system of government.

At the end of the century, Rav Judah b. Yeḥezqel founded a rabbinical academy at Pumbedita, and for the next fifty years, the heads of the school kept a fund for its support, thus attempting to remain free of dependence upon the exilarchic treasury. At the same time, leading

[1] *History* II, 92–125; Y. A. Solodukho, "Upper-class landholders", in J. Neusner (ed.), *Soviet Views of Talmudic Judaism*: five papers by Y. A. Solodukho in English translation (Leiden, 1973).

rabbis asserted that rabbis should not have to pay the *karga*, or head-tax, imposed by the Sasanian régime on minority communities. They taught that scriptures, tradition, and even Artaxerxes of Achaemenian times, all had freed them of that obligation. Since taxes were apportioned by communities, the exilarch would have had to collect funds from other[1] Jews in order to exempt the rabbis. This he did not attempt; instead he forced the rabbis to pay, which further exacerbated the relations of the two groups. By the middle of the 4th century, the school at Pumbedita, now under Rava's headship, was subjected to close exilarchic supervision.[1]

When, under Pērōz (459–84), Jews and Christians were persecuted, the exilarch Huna V was executed in the year 470, according to the letter of R. Sherira. The office of exilarch probably did not function during the rest of Sasanian rule.

JUDAISM

Archaeological information on the religion of other than rabbinical Jews derives from the synagogue at Dura-Europos[2] and from the magical bowls at Nippur. The interpretation of the paintings in the Dura synagogue remains uncertain. It seems clear that both Iranian and hellenistic motifs influenced the artist(s). The magical bowls of Nippur tell us that ordinary folk, anxious for health and marital happiness, freed themselves of demonic power by issuing, in the name of a rabbi, bills of divorce, much like those serving mortals, against Liliths and other tormentors. The Jewish bowls themselves indicate no peculiarly Jewish concerns. The things that bothered Jews, and the magic by which they overcame their troubles, were common also to Iranian, Syriac and Mandean clients of bowl-magicians. All wanted to be saved from demons and illness, to exorcize ghosts, and to rid themselves of Liliths. All believed in demons and looked for a salvation consisting of good health and prosperity. For Jewish magic, the biblical account of creation suggested that great magical power was attached to the use of the divine name.[3]

Three bodies of literary evidence contain information on Judaism. First is the medieval Zoroastrian text, *Škand Gumānīk Vičār*, of which

[1] *History* III, 41–94; IV, 73–124; V, 45–60, 124–7, 248–59, 320–43.

[2] Kraeling, Goodenough and Bickerman, above p. 909 n 2.

[3] Montgomery, above, p. 909 n 2; *History* V, 217–43; B. A. Levine, "The Language of the Magical Bowls", in *History* V, 343–73.

chapters XIII and XIV are devoted to a critique of Judaism.[1] That critique was probably based on pre-Islamic materials. It emphasized the difficulty of believing in one God and argued on the basis of both scriptural and rabbinical materials that the Judaic God is inconsistent, petulant and a source of evil. More strikingly, the author took for granted that Judaism taught a rigid astrological doctrine. The stars are not subject to God's control: "He himself is not the dispenser of daily portion and lot, and the division is not by his will, and he cannot change fate" (XIV. 71–2). The Zoroastrian critic therefore saw Judaism as not much different from any other astrological doctrine.

Second, Aphrahat, the first Syriac-writing Church Father (*fl.* 339–45), produced a substantial defence of Christianity and critique of Judaism.[2] The Mesopotamian Jews whom Aphrahat described were totally outside the influence of characteristically rabbinic doctrines. They practised circumcision, observed dietary laws, the Sabbath, and various other rites, and expected that the Messiah would come and bring them back to Palestine in due course. Aphrahat's Jews took literally both the theology and the practical commandments found in scripture. Not a single belief or practice referred to by Aphrahat derived from any other source. Aphrahat knows nothing of an oral Torah, rabbis, rabbinical interpretations of biblical taboos or other marks of the presence of Pharisaic-rabbinic Judaism. Such a non-rabbinic Judaism may have existed in Babylonia and Mesopotamia from the earliest days, but we know nothing about its history. We may surmise, though, that the Adiabenians converted to belief in the Temple, in the holiness of the land of Israel, in the Mosaic revelation of the written law and similar doctrines and practices common to Jews through most of the ancient world.

Third, the Babylonian Talmud (*c.* A.D. 500–600) and related literature portray the religious life and teachings of the rabbis, whose political rôle we have already noted. Central to that form of Judaism was the conviction that Moses had revealed a dual Torah at Mount Sinai, one in writing which everyone knew, the other handed on through oral tradition, and available only through Pharisaic-rabbinic tradition.

The Torah taught, the rabbis held, how man must emulate God. Their rabbinical schools and way of life were shaped by those of

[1] J. de Menasce (tr.), *Une Apologétique mazdéenne du IX^e siècle: Škand Gumānīk Vičār* (Fribourg-en-Suisse, 1945); *History* IV, 403–23.

[2] Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism.*

Moses, whom they called "our rabbi", and his were modelled on God's. Rabbinic Judaism therefore constituted a religious-mythical system in which earth and heaven corresponded to one another:

Joseph b. R. Joshua was sick and fell into a trance. [Afterward] his father said to him, "What vision did you see?" He replied, "I saw a world upside down, the upper below, the lower above." His father said to him. "You saw a well-regulated world. And in what condition did you see us?" He replied, "As we are esteemed [for our Torah] here, so it is there."[1]

The Torah was the nexus and model for both. A sage in the streets of Pumbedita or Sura learned the same Torah that Heaven not only had given at Sinai but even now studied. The rabbi should be honoured more than a scroll of the Torah, for through his learning and logic he might alter the content of Mosaic revelation. He followed a highly ritualized way of life, including many disciplines to set him apart from ordinary Babylonian Jews, particularly the rites of discipleship and of study, and also differing modes of eating, dress and the like. The rabbis aimed to turn all Babylonian Jews into rabbis, that is, to change the antecedent Judaic tradition of Babylonia (as of other Jewish communities) into a replication of rabbinical teaching. By later Sasanian times they had made considerable progress toward this goal, through the combination of administrative and judicial authority, available to them in the courts, and the personal reputation and charisma they enjoyed as holy men. It would, however, be a gross error to overestimate the differences separating ordinary Jews from the rabbinical estate. The rabbis deepened merely conventional social manners or customs into spiritual conceptions and magnified these by deeply mythic ways of thinking. The rabbinical ideal, unlike the Manichaean, was anti-dualistic. No one conceived of two ways of living the holy life or two sorts of salvation, but of only one Torah to be studied and observed by all. The peculiarities of the rabbinical way of living did not amount to much. Rabbis lived like ordinary folk; they married and worked for a living; they could eat with other Jews; they prayed with them. The singular doctrines of rabbinical Judaism were not esoteric, but concerned the proper way of conducting everyday life. The courts could do little to change people's private lives; they judged routine small-claims cases, matters of personal status, and little more than that. But the rabbis' influence, based upon their discipline, their doctrine, and their reputation for miraculous powers and familiarity

[1] b. Bava' Batra' 10b.

with God's will, in time transformed the religious life of Babylonian Jewry.[1] The single most important event in the history of the Jews and of Judaism was the formation of the Babylonian Talmud upon the foundations of Babylonian Jewish political, cultural and religious life. In a less cosmopolitan and accommodating civilization, that document probably could not have emerged. The Iranians primarily contributed not doctrines or other sorts of "influence",[2] but the opportunity for Jewry to work out its own affairs in its own way.

[1] *History* I, 156–77; II, 126–240, 251–87; III, 95–338; IV, 125–402; V, 133–216, 244–342.
[2] *History* IV, 424–7.

CHAPTER 25

CHRISTIANS IN IRAN

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN EXPANSION IN IRAN

It will always be difficult to form a clear picture of the initial stages of a religion, however much one may know of the revolutionary character of the founder's circumstances and basic religion. It is quite a long process for a new religious society to free itself of the old traditions, to create its own image and to justify its claim to independence. Christianity is no exception in this respect. To the Romans, for example (cf. Suetonius and Tacitus), it was scarcely more than an episode in the history of Jewry, an internal Jewish problem giving rise to disturbances which had regrettable political consequences for the Romans. Nevertheless, the young Christianity very soon became a missionary church whose history is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. It is clear that this missionary work soon made a lasting mark. As early as the beginning of the 2nd century, the Younger Pliny, the imperial representative in the province of Bithynia and Pontus in Asia Minor, found it necessary to write (x. 96) to Trajan for advice concerning the treatment of the Christians. At about the same time, Tacitus (*Annals* xv. 44) records that the "pernicious superstition" (*exitiabilis superstitio*) had spread to Rome itself (*per urbem*). One should be cautious, however, in assessing the extent and influence of these first communities, and even more so in evaluating the missionary activities in the Euphrates–Tigris area. It is only necessary to establish that Christian groups existed in these parts of the empire at an early date.

The first opportunity for people of Iranian origin to learn of the new teaching was provided, according to Acts 2.9, by the pentecostal miracle in Jerusalem, which was witnessed by Jews from Parthia, Media, Elam and Mesopotamia. This statement, although we may interpret it with every reservation, clearly indicates that the starting point of Christianization was the Jewish–Christian groups to the east of the Euphrates. These groups were constantly used as a plaything between Roman and Parthian interests. Their early strength was concentrated in the district of Adiabene (main town, Irbīl; Gk Arbēla) and in the district of Osrhoene (main town, Edessa; Gk Urrhai). Missionary activity was

anonymous and took the form of a slow but increasing infiltration. This, however, was not so notable as to interest the non-Christian historiographers of the day. It is now generally assumed that Adiabene was the actual centre, even more important than Edessa;[1] this importance was largely due to the prominence of the Jewish element in the district, and the conversion of the ruling, Parthian-oriented dynasty to Judaism in the 1st century A.D. under Queen Helena.[2] From A.D. 109 to 116, her grandson, Abgar VII, was king of Osrhoene, which, for a short period in the middle of the 1st century, was under the control of Adiabene. According to the Syriac "Chronicle of Arbela", written by the otherwise unknown Mešīhā-Zekā in the 6th century, Christianity in Adiabene stands out clearly from its surroundings as early as the year 100, when Mār Peqīdā was appointed bishop by his teacher, Addai, by the laying on of hands. It is remarkable and certainly in accordance with the actual circumstances that the bishops succeeding Peqīdā bear distinctly Jewish names (Šemšōn, Isḥāq, Abraham, Nōḥ, Hābēl [Abel] etc.). At the time of the Iranian change of dynasty at the beginning of the 3rd century there were, according to the "Chronicle",[3] more than twenty bishops from Bēt Zabdai northwards through Karkā də Bēt Səlōk[4] and southwards to Susiana (Bēt Lāpāṭ, Hormizd-Ardashīr) and Mesene (Pərāt də Maišān), but none in Nisibis or in Seleucia–Ctesiphon.[5]

The unrestricted optimism that greeted the publication of Mešīhā-Zekā's work has gradually been replaced by a well-founded scepticism, particularly following the Bollandist Paul Peeters' fundamental, critical work, "Le Passionnaire d'Adiabène".[6] This scepticism, however, in no way denies its value, in some fields very significant, but fastens upon

[1] Cf. Drijvers, *Bardaiṣan of Edessa*, p. 215 and n. 2.

[2] See J. Neusner, "The Conversion of Adiabene to Judaism", *Journal of Biblical Literature* LXXXIII (Boston, 1964), 60ff, and Josephus, *Antiquities* XX.2.

[3] P. 30 ll. 55ff, p. 106.

[4] According to a different source (Bedjan II, p. 512), this had been a "blessed field" for Christianity since the time of the Arsacid Balāš (Vologeses III, A.D. 148–91).

[5] Because, according to J. Neusner, the Jews in Nisibis and Babylonia were under the influence of the Tannaim: *A History of the Jews in Babylonia* I (Leiden, 1965), p. 169, and "New Perspectives on Babylonian Jewry in the Tannaitic Age", *Judaica* XXII (Zürich, 1966), 25; but in fact the see was not founded until the year 300–1 by Babu, predecessor of Jacob of Nisibis.

[6] *AB* XLIII (1925), 261–304. Cf. also the misgivings of I. Ortiz de Urbina, "Intorno al valore storico della Cronaca di Arbela", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* II (Rome, 1936), 5–32. More recently this scepticism has, apparently quite convincingly, given rise to proof that the script is simply a fake; cf. J.-M. Fiey, "Auteur et date de la Chronique d'Arbèles", *L'Orient Syrien* XII (Paris, 1967), 265–302. But even so it still retains a certain value because, although of a later date, it has certainly preserved and used very old Syriac monastic traditions passed on by word of mouth.

the fact that the main source, the "teacher" *malfānā*[1] or "author" *maktəbānā*,[2] Abel, and the work itself are unnoticed in Nestorian literature. As there is no other way of verifying or even of rendering probable its information concerning the ancient history of Persian Christianity, the "Chronicle of Arbela" can be disregarded as a *primary* source. It represents the common tendency of the ancients to establish an unbroken connection with the period of the Apostles, and it may be compared to the work describing the Christianization of Osrhoene, *Doctrina Addai*. This also records the apocryphal stories of Jesus' correspondence with King Abgar and the finding of the Cross. The principal character, Addai, Peqīdā's teacher and "one of the 72 Apostles"[3] is sent to Edessa by the Apostle Judas Thomas. Here, through the intervention of the Jew Tobias ben Tobias, he comes in contact with King Akbar Ukāmā (Abgar V, 4 B.C. to A.D. 7 and later A.D. 13 to A.D. 50),[4] who is converted to Christianity. The missionary activities of Addai are taken up and carried on effectively "in all this country of Mesopotamia"[5] by his disciple Aggai. After his violent death, Palut takes his place after being ordained by Serapion, bishop of Antioch, who himself "had received the hand of priesthood from Zephyrinus, bishop of the City of Rome".[6] The whole work gives the impression of a legend and is even more clearly a formulated attempt to establish a positive apostolic succession than is the "Chronicle of Arbela". As Serapion was bishop around 190–210 A.D., and Zephyrinus from 198 to 217, it can only be Abgar VIII the Great (177–212) of the Edessa kings who, probably for political reasons, accepted Christianity[7] and at whose court lived the gnostic Bardaisān.[8] The "Chronicle of Edessa",[9] when referring to the catastrophic flood in the year 513 of the Seleucid era (A.D. 201), describes an Akbar freed of all legendary features in a manner that takes for granted a positive attitude to Christianity on his part.

The "History (*tašʿītā*) of the Apostle Mār Mārī"[10] is in the same

[1] "Chronicle", 2.29. [2] "Chronicle", 4.14.

[3] Ed. Phillips, p. 5 (text fol. 4a, centre); cf. Luke 10,17, where some textual witnesses give 70 and some 72.

[4] The chronology of the Edessa kings according to F. M. Heichelheim in *HO* 11/4, 2, pp. 209–10. [5] *bēt nahrīn*, fol. 31a at end.

[6] Ed. Cureton, p. 23; ed. Phillips, p. 50 (text fol. 32b, last line, has *'ntyky'*).

[7] Cf. J. B. Segal, *Edessa "the blessed city"* (Oxford, 1970), p. 70.

[8] Heichelheim, *op. cit.*, p. 210, has in mind Abgar IX Severus, who was deposed by Caracalla in the year 214; he considers Abgar VIII's conversion to Christianity about 202 as historically correct; cf. W. Bauer's scepticism, "Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum", *Beiträge zur historischen Theologie* x (Tübingen, 1934), pp. 9ff.

[9] Ed. Guidi in *Chronica Minora*, Part I, pp. 3-4 (Versio) and 1-3 (Textus).

[10] Ed. Abbeloos, pp. 50ff.

literary category as *Doctrina Addai*. It is a book with a purpose, expressing Seleucia–Ctesiphon's ambitions of supremacy. The book tells of Mār Mārī's leaving Edessa after the death of his teacher and going to Nisibis, which he Christianized. Later, with the help of his disciples, he expanded the missionary work into the various Iranian provinces, and himself went south to Bēt Arāmāyē, Babylonia, where he founded a bishopric at Kōkē (Seleucia–Ctesiphon), and to Susiana (Bēt Hūzāyē) and Persis (Bēt Pārsāyē). In these areas he confirmed that indigenous merchants converted by Addai had laid a solid foundation.[1] Shortly before his death, Mār Mārī named his disciple Pāpā (see below) as his successor. The characteristics of the legend are unmistakable, but in spite of all misgivings on this and on the two other texts, they cannot *eo ipso* be disregarded as having no historical value. To have been acceptable to people at the time, the legends must have been based upon historical fact. They will not stand up in detail to critical analysis, but some of their historical bases can be clearly set out.

Around the year 170, Tatian from "the country of the Assyrians" (most probably Adiabene), after his return from Rome where he had been won over to Christianity by Justin Martyr, created his gospel concord, *Diatessaron* (*τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων εὐαγγέλιον*).[2] This very quickly appeared in Syriac. Its original language is thought to have been Greek, as is probable, but not certain, from the Dura-Europos fragment dating from the middle of the 3rd century, or certainly before 256–7 when Shāpūr I conquered the town. Such a work presupposes a Christian public of some dimensions, and it must have filled a need. At the end of the 2nd century, Bishop Aberkios of Hieropolis found fellow Christians in the Nisibis area:[3] on the basis of the references in the *Vita* of Aberkios (4th century) to his meeting with Bardaisān (*Βαρχασάνης*) this is probably historically correct.[4] Bardaisān himself was a Christian; at least, his teaching was strongly influenced by Christian ideas, although his concept of Christianity was stamped as heretical in later heresiology, particularly Afrēm. In the "Book of the Laws of Countries", attributed to him and edited by the disciple Philippus at the beginning of the 3rd century, he refers to Christian brothers and sisters on Iranian territory.[5]

[1] Pp. 121–2.
[2] For bibliography see Baumstark, pp. 19–21:, Ortiz de Urbina, pp. 34–5; B. Spuler, "Die nestorianische Kirche", in *HO* VIII/2 (Leiden, 1961), p. 127 n. 2.
[3] The Aberkios inscription, ll. 10–11 in E. Preuschen (ed.) *Analecta: Kürzere Texte zur Geschichte der alten Kirche und des Kanons*, 2nd ed., Part I (Tübingen, 1909), 26–8.
[4] Cf. Drijvers, pp. 170–1.
[5] P. 29, ll. 5ff; Parthia, Media, Kāšān, Fārs.

There is also the report of about the same period in the "Chronicle of Edessa" concerning the destruction of part of the Christian Church in the city in the catastrophic flood in the year 201. The reference in Eusebius[1] to the active participation of the Osrhoene community in the controversy about the Easter festival under Bishop Victor of Rome (189–99) is, however, although historically probable, uncertain, as this actual passage is not found in Rufin's Latin translation.

From these sources it is clearly apparent that, in view of the time necessary to establish even a fairly small community, Christian communities existed in eastern areas from the beginning of the 2nd century, and that during the century these communities consolidated themselves by some form of organization. But one must not be led to believe that Christianization was particularly radical, or that the structure of the Church was particularly extensive. For example, names in an inscription from the Edessa area indicate that a pagan cult was still extensive in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.[2]

With the defeat of the Arsacid Ardavān V on the Hormizdagān plain in the year 224, a new and vigorous dynasty came to power in Iran, accompanied by justified anxiety on the part of both Jews and Christians. Because tolerance was used as a political principle, or merely because of religious indifference, the Parthian period was characterized by peace and quiet for the non-Zarathustrian minorities. Consequently, as regards Christianity, this period when systematic religious persecution was unknown resulted in further consolidation and advance. Perhaps this was also because the missionaries had wisely avoided the main political and mercantile centres and concentrated on the more remote areas, relatively uninfluenced by the Arsacid administration.[3] During the first half of the 3rd century, the number of Christians became so large that the non-Christian state was forced to regard them as a potential element of unrest. There are unmistakable historical indications of this. About the middle of the century, Mānī, the founder of Manichaeism, appeared. The enormous importance given to Jesus is a distinctive feature of his syncretistic gnostic religion; it is true that he is depicted in an *interpretatio manichaica*, but even so it is clearly the Jesus of the New Testament whose words Mānī uses as his own in his

[1] "Ecclesiastical History" v.23.4.

[2] See J. B. Segal, "Some Syriac Inscriptions of the 2nd-3rd Century A.D.", *BSOAS* XVI (1954), 29–30.

[3] As opposed to Fārs (Persis) where the Christians were to be found mostly in the main cities; cf. E. Sachau, "Vom Christentum in der Persis", *SPAW* 1916. xxix, p. 965.

work, *Šāhbuhragān*, written in Persian, with direct quotations from Matt. 25.31ff.[1] This, together with the intimate knowledge of Christian phenomena disclosed in the Manichaean texts, can only mean that, in Babylonia at the time of Mānī, it was easy to find people in a position to provide reliable information. These people must have represented established and well-organized Christianity, as this is the only way to explain the necessity to build as many as sixty Christian tombs[2] at the same period – about the year 250 according to archaeological investigation – in so small an area as the island of Khārg in the Persian Gulf. Another indisputable indication of this connection is that Kartīr, the dogmatic Zoroastrian church leader, in his Ka'ba-yi Zartušt inscription of about 280 (under Bahrām II), refers to the persecution (*zatan* "to beat, kill") of Christians ("Nazaraeans *n'cl'y* and Christians" *klstyd'n*).[3] A person as self-important as Kartīr would not have named an unimportant and meaningless minority in an official inscription *ad majorem gloriam religionis zoroastricae*. Christianity was for Kartīr an opponent to be taken seriously. The use of the double expression also indicates this. To understand this correctly has been and still is a problem,[4] but a solution may be sought against the background of the supply of large contingents of Greek-speaking Christians to the Sasanian empire, probably on two occasions (256 and 260), during the war against the Romans.[5] These were provided by Shāpūr's deportations of the population of Antioch and other cities. Among the many people thus taken to Iran as spoils of war[6] and left in Persis, Parthia, Susiana (Khūzistān) and Babylonia (Asūristān, Bēt Arāmāyē) as subjects "belonging to the king"[7] were ordinary priests as well as high church dignitaries such as Demetrius/Demetrianus of Antioch.[8] These prisoners, in other words, made up organized communities with their own religious language and their own church leaders, and they retained both in their Syriac-

[1] The Mid. Pers. Turfan texts M 475 and M 477, in F. W. K. Müller, "Handschriften-Reste in Estrangelo-Schrift aus Turfan, Chinesisch-Turkistan II", *APAW* 1904. 2.

[2] Cf. E. E. Herzfeld, *Archaeological History of Iran* (London, 1935), pp. 103–4, and L. vanden Berghe, *Archéologie de l'Iran ancien* (Leiden, 1959), p. 53.

[3] Line 10 in Chaumont, "L'Inscription", pp. 343, 347, 358.

[4] On the sects mentioned by Kartīr see Bailey, p. 907.

[5] As to the difficult problem of the chronology of the Shāpūr wars, see E. Honigmann and A. Maricq, *Recherches sur les "Res gestae divi Saporis"*, (Brussels, 1953), pp. 131ff; bibliography, *ibid.* p. 165 and in Maricq, "Res gestae" (rev. ed.), pp. 99ff.

[6] Maricq, "Res gestae", l. 34 (rev. ed., pp. 56–7).

[7] Procopius II. xiv. 3; *anšahrik* "from another country", as distinct from *bandak*, the native slave, in Sasanian law.

[8] See P. Peeters, "S. Démétrianus évêque d'Antioche?" *AB* XLII (1924), 288ff.

speaking, fellow-Christian surroundings. Thus, according to the "Seert Chronicle",[1] there were two churches at Rēv-Ardashīr in Persis, both with their own languages, Greek and Syriac. In Susiana,[2] open strife developed between the two Christian parties because each had its own bishop[3] and neither appeared to be willing to acknowledge or give in to the other. In the eyes of the Iranians, represented by Kartīr, they must have seemed two such peculiar forms of Christianity that they took for granted a classification distinguishing between Greek-speaking[4] and Syriac-speaking Christians. This concept, however, does not prevent J. de Menasce's assumption from also being correct: that "Christians" meant "Marcionites".[5] The "Acts of the Martyrs", in two incidents, even emphasize directly that the Marcionites in their mistaken belief called themselves "Christians" (*kresṭyānē*),[6] as opposed to the genuine Syriac expressions *nāṣərāyā* and *məšīḥāyā*.[7] The Marcionites' use of the term, however, was locally restricted to those areas where they were in the majority or represented exclusively the Greek-speaking element, as "where they introduced Christianity, 'Christian' was to them the only natural word".[8] It is therefore quite correct for the Mār Abā text to refer to the identification kresṭyānā (*marqiōnā*) as being "normal custom *here*" (*ʿyādā datnān*),[9] as the designation "kresṭyānā" in Syriac literature was not reserved exclusively for Marcion's followers.

With their increasing number and strength, the Christians in Iran found it necessary in the latter half of the 3rd century to amalgamate the hitherto independent communities into Church areas, dioceses, and to establish their boundaries and spheres of influence. Disputes between the Greek-speaking and Syriac-speaking communities, the often-

[1] I/1, p. 222.

[2] At Jundēshāpūr, the Bēt Lāpāṭ refounded by Shāpūr I, and later at the Karkā də Lādān built by Shāpūr II.

[3] See Chabot, "Synodicon", pp. 32–3 (Syriac text) and pp. 271–2; O. Braun, *Das Buch der Synhados*, pp. 28–9.

[4] Cf. Acts 11.26: "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch".

[5] *Škand-gumānīk vičār*, pp. 206ff.

[6] Mār Simon – (Šemʿōn bar Ṣabbāʿē) and the Mār Abā Acts; see Braun, *Akten*, pp. 29, 32, 190, and the excellent survey by G. Wiessner, "Untersuchungen zu einer Gruppe syrischer Märtyrakten aus der Christenverfolgung Schapurs II" (Ph.D. dissertation, Würzburg, 1962), p. 317.

[7] Simon, for example, was the "leader of the Nazaraeans", *rēšā də nāṣərāy*. An identical parallel to the double designation is supplied by the Malabar community in India with its "Christians" (of Greek origin) and "Nazrani" (Nāsərāyā, of Semitic origin); cf. E. R. Hambye, "Note sur les communautés orientales du Malabar", *L'Orient Syrien* I (Paris, 1956), p. 99.

[8] Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 29 n. 1.

[9] *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha*, ed. P. Bedjan (Leipzig, 1895), p. 213, l. 17.

revealed rivalry between Nisibis and Seleucia–Ctesiphon,[1] as well as the strong resentment of Susiana and Persis against any attempt at interference from without, contributed greatly to the adverse developments. Shortly before the year 300, however, many communities in Iran must have felt so strongly that they belonged to a larger unity that there is a certain ratio in the sympathetic reception of the claim of one bishopric to superiority and patriarchal rights. Such a claim was made by the bishop at Seleucia–Ctesiphon, Pāpā bar Aggai,[2] and, in spite of resistance, particularly on the part of Mīlēs of Susa and his own archdeacon,[3] Simon bar Sabbā'ē, it was met with sympathy and approval. According to Church tradition, it is even maintained that Simon, who was appointed anti-bishop for some period during the disputes, changed his mind when he became Pāpā's successor and insisted even more strongly upon the supremacy of his diocese; following the thirty-nine or forty years of persecution under Shāpūr II, which paralysed the internal life of the Church and its external activities, it became a *fait accompli* at the synod in 410. Isḥāq, who organized the synod, was "bishop of Seleucia–Ctesiphon, Catholicos and Head [*rēšā*] over the bishops of all the Orient [*madnəḥā*]".[4] Fourteen years later, at the Dādīšō' synod, Pāpā's initiative received the unreserved support of the Iranian Church, when Agapet of Bēt Lāpāṭ publicly expressed strong disapproval of his opponent's behaviour.[5] Yet another sign of the tendency towards unity among the communities within a certain province is given by the attendance, well attested by the various lists of participants, at the Nicaea meeting in the year 325 of a certain John of Persis.[6] This was the very province that had always maintained its exceptional autocephalous position in relation to Seleucia–Ctesiphon, and had never definitely submitted. This was no doubt because Christians there had a common language with the ruling dynasty, and by all accounts created a Christian literature in that language that was to be of considerable importance for the later Nestorian mission in Central Asia.[7]

[1] Cf. J. B. Segal, "Mesopotamian Communities from Julian to the Rise of Islam", *PBA* XLI (1955), 134–5.

[2] As to Pāpā's apocryphal correspondence and the sources of his history, see Braun, "Der Briefwechsel des Katholikos Papa von Seleucia", *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* XVIII (Innsbruck, 1894), 163–82, 546–65.

[3] *'rkdy'qwn*, "Se'ert Chronicle", I/1, p. 296, l. 3.

[4] Chabot, "Synodicon", p. 18, ll. 10–12.

[5] *Ibid.* pp. 289ff.

[6] Yohannan of Bēt Pārsāyē; cf. Haase, pp. 248ff and esp. p. 259 (no. 37); also e.g. Chabot (ed.), *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, p. 250. According to Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, ed. I. A. Heikel (Leipzig, 1902), p. 80, l. 14, "even a Persian bishop attended the Synod".

[7] Cf. O. Hansen, Über die verschiedenen Quellen der christlichen Literatur der Sogder", *AO* XXX (1966), 99–100.

The official documentation of the division of Iranian Christianity into provinces with a metropolitan as leader appeared in the documents of the synod of 410, where the six "classical" provinces are enumerated as known areas: Bēt Arāmāyē with Seleucia–Ctesiphon as metropolis, Bēt Hūzāyē with Bēt Lāpāṭ, Bēt Arbāyē with Nisibis, Maišān with Pərāt də Maišān, Adiabene with Arbela and Bēt Garmay with Karkā də Bēt Səlōk.[1] It is uncertain, however, when the actual foundation of the individual provinces took place, but in theory it may go back to the time of Pāpā. This division, however, by no means incuded all the Christian areas within the frontiers of the Sasanian empire. The assembled bishops were, of course, aware of this, as (Canon XXI) they expressed their conviction that "the bishops from the far-away regions [*atrawātā raḥīqē*], from Pārs, the Islands [Bēt Qaṭrāyē, i.e. eastern Arabia and Baḥrain], Bēt Mādāyē, Bēt R[az]īqāyē [the Ray area], indeed, even from the Abar-šahr regions" would agree with the decisions reached by the synod.[2] The Yahballāhā synod in 420 was attended by most of these bishops, if we take the introductory words of the text as an elliptical way of saying "Mār Yahballāhā, Catholicos, and the bishops of Bēt Lāpāṭ, Nisibis, Pārs etc."[3] Four years later, at the Dādīšōʿ synod, this was, in any event, clearly affirmed by the direct naming of, among others, Bishop Yazdād of Rēv-Ardashīr (Persis), Bishop David of Ray and Bishop David of Abar-šahr. It is, however, unclear when these areas were transformed into hyparchies. As to Persis, it is not until the synodal documents of 497 that the Rēv-Ardashīr bishop *expressis verbis* appears as "Metropolitan of Pārs".[4] Still later, in 554, 585 and 676 respectively, Marv (Margiana), Herāt[5] (Harēw) and "the Islands" (Bēt Qaṭrāyē) are included. But none of this is an unequivocal guarantee of the chronology of the development, as the metropolitan title was not used before the synod of 486, whereas the hyparchies certainly existed in 410. In any

[1] See the excellent survey of place-names in Wiessner, *op. cit.*, pp. 215ff, and concerning the provinces and sees as a whole, E. Sachau, "Zur Ausbreitung des Christentums in Asien", *APAW* 1919. 1, pp. 14ff, and G. Wiessner, "Zu den Subskriptionslisten der ältesten christlichen Synoden in Iran", *Festschrift für Wilhelm Eilers* (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 288ff.

[2] Chabot, "Synodicon", p. 34, ll. 19–21, and p. 273; as to Bēt Mādāyē, see Sachau, *op. cit.*, pp. 59–61; as to Abar-šahr, see Henning, "Mitteliranisch", pp. 94–5.

[3] Chabot, "Synodicon", p. 37, ll. 1ff.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 64, l. 30.

[5] According to W. Barthold, *Zur Geschichte des Christentums in Mittel-Asien bis zur mongolischen Eroberung* (Tübingen and Leipzig, 1901), pp. 14, 22, there is said to have been a Christian bishop in Marv as early as 334, and one in Herāt in the year 430; but cf. concerning Marv, Sachau, "Die Christianisierungs-Legende von Merw", *Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* XXXIII (Giessen, 1918), 399ff.

case, the synod of 410 marks the conclusion of a decisive epoch in the history of Iranian Christians.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND THE SASANIANS

The assumption of power by the Sasanian dynasty brought about a national and religious renaissance with far-reaching consequences in foreign and internal policies. There was a great opportunity for a rigorous religious policy towards the non-Zoroastrian Iranians. Zoroastrianism now became for the first time in Iranian history a definitely state religion, and its priesthood knew how to use such possibilities when time and opportunity were ripe. Tradition attributes to the founder of the dynasty, Ardashīr, the maxim that religion and kingship are twins, neither being complete without the other; this is already to be found in the fictitious "Letter of Tansar", whose composition can be dated with certainty at the end of the Sasanian period, and it is repeated as good Latin in the 13th-century Islamic Iran of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī. It is reasonable to assume that in this respect also Ardashīr considered himself to be the heir of the Achaemenians. In the dynastic legend – the "Res gestae of Ardashīr", *Kārnāmak-i Ardašīr-i Pāpakān* – the family is clearly traced back to "the family of Darius, son of Darius" (*tōḫmak-i Dārāy-ī Dārāyān*). A veil of obscurity was purposely drawn over the Iranian, but non-Persian, Arsacids, and unfortunately also over their eirenic policies towards people of another religion. On several occasions, both Christians and Jews were to feel the consequences of a harsh internal policy. This religious factor weighed heavily in the relationships of the Sasanians as a whole, particularly towards their Christian subjects; but this was not the only factor. Political and, particularly after Shāpūr I's wars with Rome, economic considerations played their part. Shāpūr III (383–8),[1] for example, freed Christian (*naṣārā*) prisoners because it was of greater value to the state for them to pursue their crafts and to pay taxes.[2] Even this leniency, dictated as it was by purely economic considerations, was no more tolerated by the Magians than was the exclusively political motivation stemming from the contemporary political situation. This situation was later to secure a more tolerable relationship with the Roman empire.[3] A political motive, of course,

[1] The chronological data here and in what follows are according to J. Gagé, *La Montée des sassanides et l'heure de Palmyre* (Paris, 1964), pp. 157ff.

[2] "Chronicle of Se'ert", 1/2, 261, ll. 3ff; N. Pigulevskaja, *Les Villes de l'état iranien aux époque parthe et sassanide* (Paris, 1963), p. 174, and O. Klíma's review, *ArOr* XXXIII (1965) 143.

[3] Klíma, *loc. cit.*, pp. 143f.

might also have been the impulse that initiated the persecutions, and it is a widespread assumption that this was always the case when the Church's bands of martyrs increased. But this is not quite correct, although there is a certain basis for it in contemporary literature. Thus, Eznik of Kołb[1] asserts that one is either the servant of the King of Kings (*ark'ayic ark'ayi caray*) or the servant of the Emperor (*kayser*). The one excludes the other. Similar viewpoints are expressed in Syriac literature, for example in the Mār Šimōn Act. This states, as a Zoroastrian motive for persecution, that the Christians "share the views of the Emperor",[2] but emphasizes in the same breath that it is a pretext.[3] The political motive is therefore subsidiary. This fact was certainly known to the Christians because it was most effective, and it was therefore resorted to after purely religious fanaticism had agitated people's minds and now required public sanction to take effect. The two motives, the religious and the political, cannot be separated. They together form the complex of motives that preceded almost all anti-Christian measures from and including the time of Shāpūr II.[4] If the Christians of Iran had really been considered a political danger, an absolute ban on any form of Christian cult would have been natural and logical. At no time, however – not even during the violent persecution under Shāpūr II – was this the case. Throughout the whole Sasanian period, Christianity was tolerated[5] and, without reservations on the part of the state, Christians performed war service on an equal footing with their Zoroastrian fellow countrymen. The Christian Grīgōr was in fact the leader of the Persians in the war against the Romans.[6] Nor was there any lack of incidents where religious considerations were clearly the primary motive; it was the Magians who provoked the persecution; they even undertook the torture of Christian prisoners;[7] in many cases, the disturbances occurred with the very object of pleasing and satisfying the priesthood,[8] to whose wishes the "great king" yielded. Against this background it is intelligible that there could be systematic persecution

[1] *Elc alandoç* IV.2 (Venice ed. 1926), 275, ll. 4ff.

[2] "*bənay tar'itēh dəqēsar*", Bedjan II, 136, l. 14.

[3] "*'elthā*", *ibid.*, l. 3.

[4] With the possible exception that Shāpūr initiated the persecution for purely political reasons; but in this case also the religious factor soon came to the fore; see Wiessner, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[5] See Sachau, "Von den rechtlichen Verhältnissen der Christen im Sasanidenreich", *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen zu Berlin* II (1907), 72, 79.

[6] G. Hoffmann, "Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer", *AKM* VII (Leipzig, 1880), 80.

[7] As to the legal procedure in the "Acts of the Martyrs", see the clear account by Wiessner, *op. cit.*, pp. 264ff.

[8] Hoffmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 24, 39, 41, 78, 81.

only when priesthood and royal power were united in mutual understanding and loyalty. It is for this very reason that the religious point is particularly emphasized, as concerns Shāpūr II and Khusrau I, in a *Dēnkart* text concerning the rehabilitation of Zoroastrianism: Shāpūr would not tolerate the spread of false religions (*akdēnīh*, ed. Madan, p. 413, l. 7) and urged zealousness (*tuxšēm*), and Khusrau had realized the truth of the Mazdayasnian religion (*rāstīh ī dēn mazdēsn bē dānist*, p. 413, ll. 12–13) and made clear his solidarity with the Zoroastrian priesthood in the fight against any kind of heresy, for what the Magians had declared, "we declare" (*xwānēm*, p. 413, l. 18). It cannot be expressed more clearly.

There may have been a causal connection between the kings' more or less intentional approach to the priesthood and the concept of *xwarənah*- (Mid. Pers. *xwarr*), the heavenly blessing, which legitimizes every king. As to the existence or non-existence of this, the Magians undoubtedly considered themselves competent to form an opinion.[1] In the case of Ardashīr (226–41), this competence was probably taken for granted as he himself had cultic functions. According to Agathias, he was initiated into the religion of the Magians.[2] The Christians had peace under the first Sasanians, if one should believe the "Chronicle of Arbela". The incidents that occurred stemmed from Ardashīr's eagerness to establish fire temples. Where this activity met with resistance, persecution could occur, although locally and to no great extent. There was, of course, no natural ratio for politically-based persecution in the 3rd century, as Christianity outside the Sasanian empire suffered heavily under the chicanery of the authorities. The reign of Shāpūr I (241–72) also brought no distress to his Christian subjects; the deportations from Antioch were not specifically anti-Christian phenomena but a natural act of military strategy, implemented with scarcely any distinction between friend[3] and foe. On the contrary, there is much to indicate that the dogmatic Kartīr was not promoted during this period and that Shāpūr pursued a tolerant religious line towards both Jews and Christians. This is rightly emphasized by M.-L. Chaumont.[4] On this basis alone,

[1] Cf. the Pāsay Act, Bedjan II, 222, ll. 7–8: "Tremble for Šāhpuhr's (Šābōr's (Shāpūr II)) *gad* (= *x*ʷ*arənah*)."

[2] See Chaumont, "Le Culte d'Anāhitā", pp. 154ff.

[3] As to the Persophile party in Antioch and the mystical Mariades/Cyriades who encouraged the party's ill will and was himself supported by it, see J. Gagé, "Les Perses à Antioche et les courses de l'hippodrome au milieu du IIIᵉ siècle à propos du 'transfuge' syrien Mariadès", *Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg* XXXI (1953), 301–24.

[4] "Les Sassanides", p. 168.

therefore, the edict of tolerance attested to by the Armenian Ełišē Vardapet[1] and by the Syriac Church historian John of Ephesus would appear to be in principle an authentic expression of his general attitude.[2] Under Shāpūr's immediate successors, his sons Hormizd I (272–3) and Bahrām I (273–6), this policy appears to have been continued with no marked deviation. The ideal coalition of *regnum* and *sacerdotium* first came with Bahrām II (276–93). This gave Kartīr a free hand and provoked the persecution of non-Zoroastrians recounted in his inscription (see above). This persecution throughout its course was purely religiously motivated. It had no catastrophic consequences for the Christian communities because Narseh (293–302) altered the directions that had hitherto been followed, giving rise to cool relations with the Zoroastrian dignitaries. The son Hormizd II (302–9) followed in his father's footsteps and "gave no heed" to the Magians.[3] It was during this period that Pāpā put forward his claim to supremacy – a sign of the stability and confidence of the Church. But peace soon came to an end when, in the field of foreign policy, a radical change occurred arising from Christianity's new status as a patronized religion under Constantine. For Shāpūr II (309–79), who "detested the Christians",[4] this was reason enough to initiate the thirty-nine or forty years of persecution whose horrors are strikingly described in the numerous Syriac "Acts of the Martyrs". During Sasanian times, this is the only known general persecution of the Christians in a spirit of orthodox Zoroastrianism. Iranian Christianity was saved from total destruction only because Shāpūr's successors were incapable of continuing or did not wish to continue this religious policy.

The large body of Syriac "Acts of the Martyrs" dating from the time of Shāpūr II have often been a subject of research interest. The "Se'ert Chronicle" established the authorship of Bishop Mārūṭā of Maiferqaṭ,[5] and therewith the basic view which until recent times came to be accepted as an undisputed postulate. Mainly as a result of French and German studies, however, it is now clear that neither Mārūṭā nor indeed any individual author can be seriously regarded as the originator of the collection. As it stands, it is the result of anonymous editing of very

[1] Elisaeus, *History of Vardan and the War of the Armenians* (Armenian text, Venice, 1950), pp. 115–16 (chap. III, sect. 18); French tr.: V. Langlois, *Collection des historiens anciens et modernes de l'Arménie* II (Paris, 1869), 202–3; English tr.: D. H. Bovajian, *Yeghisheh, The History of Vartanank* (New York, 1952), pp. 69, 71.

[2] Cf. Chaumont, *op. cit.*, pp. 183ff.

[3] "Se'ert Chronicle", I/1, 255.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 288.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 289.

different components.[1] It is characteristic of the collection generally that it is dependent upon certain elements of style. These elements are also known in western martyrology, particularly a conscious *imitatio Christi* to make the details of the martyr's death conform as much as possible to the Passion of Jesus: a traitor, "another Judas", "like Judas Iscariot"[2] appear in several texts; expressions (cf. John 13.17) "That thou doest, do quickly"[3] or (cf. John 18.4ff) "Ego sum quem quaeritis";[4] Friday as the day of martyrdom;[5] the crucifixion;[6] the sixth to the ninth hour;[7] the reaction of nature, darkness and earthquake;[8] the corpse taken away in secret[9] etc.[10] There is, however, scarcely any doubt that it would be an over-simplification to see in this *imitatio Christi* no more than a stylistic refinement. It has, equally, a real basis in the almost fanatical longing of the Christians for martyrdom, "the coronation".[11] For example, it is symptomatic that the distinction between *martyr*, *μάρτυς*, who paid with his life, and *confessor*, *ὁμολογητής*, i.e. *martyres sine sanguinis effusione*, which was continued with some consistency in the Occident, is not found in the Syriac texts, where *sāhdā* "martyr" and *mawdyānā* "confessor" are synonymous.[12] Without death, no martyrdom. But although the writing of these Syriac texts on the martyrs of the Sasanian period was significantly guided by certain literary ideals, they are by no means without historical value. They not only provide valuable information on, for example, law, life and manners of the period and on political, religious and fiscal motives,[13] but particularly on the content of the religious controversies.

In the case of the Christians, the great majority of sources concerning this controversy concentrate on the rejection of sun (*šemšā*), fire (*nūrā*)

[1] As to the history of research, see Wiessner, pp. 9ff.

[2] E.g. Braun, *Akten*, p. 107 (Bedjan II, 310), 173, 208.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 124 (Bedjan II, 373).

[4] P. Peeters, "S. Ražden le Persan", *AB* XXXIII (1914), 313.

[5] Braun, *Akten*, pp. 42 (Bedjan II, 186), 45 (Bedjan II, 191), 56, 61, 162, 184, 219, etc.; Hoffmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 84–5: "like Christ".

[6] Hoffmann, p. 111.

[7] Braun, *Akten*, pp. 45 (Bedjan II, 191), 56, 162 (Bedjan II, 557).

[8] *Ibid.* pp. 56, 136.

[9] *Ibid.* pp. 136, 177; Hoffmann, p. 90.

[10] A similar point of view has also been put forward by Wiessner, pp. 180ff in a convincing manner, with further references.

[11] Cf. Braun, *Akten*, p. 186, and P. Peeters, "Sainte Golindouch, martyre perse", *AB* LXII (1944), p. 87.

[12] See Peeters, "Les traductions orientales du mot Martyr", *AB* XXXIX (1921), pp. 54ff.

[13] Cf. Wiessner, pp. 174 (F.), 302. As to the chronology of the Shāpūr persecution, see also Peeters, "La Date du martyre de S. Syméon, archevêque de Séleucie-Ctésiphon", *AB* LVI (1938), 122ff.; M. J. Higgins, "Aphraates' Dates for Persian Persecution", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* XLIV (1951), 265–71; and Pigulevskaja, pp. 117–18.

and water (*mayyā*) as objects of cult or cultic reverence.[1] This was worship of creation and therefore blasphemy. The Armenian evidence that speaks with partiality of *moxrapašt* "ash worship"[2] is on the very same lines. Marriage between close relatives (Pahlavī *xwētokdas*, Avestan *xwaētvadatha*), which was looked upon by the Zoroastrians as a pious deed, was quite incomprehensible to the Christians, and consequently the object of bitter attack. From the detailed treatment given to it at synods[3] and in the various legal records,[4] it is apparent that this was an essential point in the Christian polemic.[5] Occasionally, but far less frequently than this part of the polemic, there were attacks on those Zoroastrians who turned time, Zurvān, into a deity raised above all gods and men and father of Ahura Mazda from whom all good emanated as well as of Ahriman from whom evil emanated – the same Zurvān who guided the course of the world and the fate of humanity. The polemic found among the Armenian authors Eznik of Kołb and Ełišē and among Syriac sources appears with biting irony and ridiculing sarcasm. Its common basis appears to have been Theodor of Mopsuestia's Περὶ τῆς ἐν Περσίδι μαγικῆς, which was translated into Syriac at an early date.[6] It is difficult completely to reject this controversy, as does H. H. Schaeder.[7] The Manichaean texts make it abundantly clear that in the 3rd century in the south-western part of the empire Zurvān was generally acknowledged as the highest god, and was consequently taken over by Mani as such (*bai zarvān*).[8] Zurvān (*zrw'*, *'zrw'*, from Avestan *zrvan-*) is also the name of the highest god in Sogdian Buddhism. Even in the more popular form indicated in Mopsuestia's text, Zurvānism was so widespread that the Manichaeans found cause strongly to reject the

[1] See J. P. Asmussen, "Das Christentum in Iran und sein Verhältnis zum Zoroastrismus", *Studia Theologica* XVI (Oslo, 1962), 11ff, where the source material is submitted.

[2] L. H. Gray, "Two Armenian Passions of Saints in the Sāsānian Period", *AB* LXVII (1949), p. 373; C. J. F. Dowsett (tr.), *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, by Movsēs Dasxuranci (London Oriental Series 8, 1961), p. 23 (*linel moxrapašt*).

[3] Chabot, "Synodicon", pp. 335, 561, 623–4.

[4] Mār Abā of the 5th century and Isō'bōkht of the 8th century.

[5] Ed. and tr. Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher* III.

[6] The sources have been collocated by A. Christensen, *Études sur le zoroastrisme de la Perse antique* (Copenhagen, 1928), pp. 48–9. See also Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher* III, pp. 264–5 (Mār Abā); H. S. Nyberg, "Cosmogonie et Cosmologie Mazdèennes", *JA* (1929), pp. 238–9 (an anonymous Syriac text); P. de Menasce, "Autour d'un texte syriaque inédit", *BSOS* IX (1937–9), 588ff (Yōḥannan bar Penkāyē); J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés* II (Paris, 1938), 100 (Mār Barhadbəšabbā). Concerning the translation of Theodor of Mopsuestia into Syriac, see Sachau, "Vom Christentum in der Persis", p. 971.

[7] "Der iranische Zeitgott und sein Mythos", *ZDMG* XCV (1941), 278ff, 290ff.

[8] Andreas-Henning, "Mitteliranische Manichaica II", *SPAW* 1933. 7, p. 361.

theory that Ahura Mazda and Ahriman were brothers.[1] Such ideas, and Zurvānism itself, were no doubt held in high esteem and completely filled religious life at certain periods and in certain regions. Whether these ideas ever reached such dimensions that we can speak of Zurvānism as the Sasanian state religion is not, however, self-evident. In one of the "Acts of the Martyrs" where Christian criticism takes the form of an anti-Zurvānistic polemic (Ahura Mazda as Satan's, i.e. Ahriman's, brother), it is obvious even in the Syriac text that the argument is completely misplaced. It is merely a malicious attempt to mock (the verb *bazaḥ*)[2] Ahura Mazda. It misses the mark, as none were conscious of Zurvān's having such a dominating rôle. Had Zurvānism really been the state religion, such a staggering argument (the adoration of Satan's brother!) would have taken first place in even the most scanty form of Christian polemic. It is probably nearer the truth to look upon Zurvānism as an aspect or branch of the Mazdaism upheld by the Sasanians as the true state religion.

Various features occur in Zoroastrian criticism of Christianity that are found again later in the *Škand gumānīk vičār* "the doubt-crushing explanation", dating from the 9th century A.D. This is at the same time an apology for Zoroastrianism (chs. 1–10), and a polemic against Islam (chs. 11–12), Jewry (chs. 13–14), Christianity (ch. 15) and Manichaeism (ch. 16). This refers particularly to the offence of considering God as the one creator of all, that is to say even of an Ahrimanian creature such as the snake,[3] surely altogether evil, and in proclaiming God as born of an earthly woman, whose conduct was not without stain, and as crucified and dead.[4] Odium is also cast upon the ascetic tendencies predominating in certain Christian circles.[5]

With the accession of Yazdgard I (399–421) a period of reconstruction and peace began for the Christian Church, directly caused by the clash of interests between Yazdgard and the Zoroastrian priesthood. In the tradition stemming from Zoroastrian circles, a tradition that was largely continued in Islamic-Persian historiography, Yazdgard is simply "the sinner" (*athīm*),[6] whereas in Syriac literature he is given the most

[1] Cf. Asmussen, *Xᵘāstvānīft. Studies in Manichaeism* (Copenhagen, 1965), pp. 168, 194; also the Mid. Pers. text M 28 (*kū Ōhrmizd ud Ahrmēn brādar hēnd*), Müller, "Handschriften-Reste II", p. 94. Such statements are of course based on facts.

[2] The Pūsay Act, Bedjan II, 221, l. 21.

[3] Braun, *Akten*, p. 116; cf. *Vendidad* 14, 5 and 18, 73.

[4] Bedjan II, 163, ll. 11-12. and Ełišē (see Langlois, *Collection des historiens*, II, 191).

[5] Braun, *Akten*, p. 120; Langlois, p. 191.

[6] Ibn al-Balkhī, *Fārsnāma*, ed. G. le Strange and R. A. Nicholson (London, 1921), p. 22: "was an evil and rapacious tyrant. That is why he was called Yazdgard-i athīm, i.e. the sinner (*bazagār*)."

flattering epithets (for example, "the victorious and glorious king");[1] indeed he becomes positively "the Christian, the blessed among kings".[2] Under his auspices and at the instigation of the emperor Arcadius' special representative, Bishop Mārūṭā of Maiferqaṭ, "the ornament of our Churches" (*šūbhārā*) and "the wise father and the honourable chief" (*abā ḥakīmā wa rēšā məyaqrā*),[3] the first Christian synod of the Sasanian empire was held in the year 410, presided over by the catholicos Mār Isḥāq of Seleucia–Ctesiphon (Syriac, Māḥōzē "the Cities"). The synod resulted in a rapprochement with the west, in that the decisions of the synod of Nicaea were acknowledged and accepted, although to an unknown extent.[4] If we accept Aphrahat as an exponent of eastern Syriac theology in the 4th century, these decisions were unknown to Christians in Iran before the synod of 410. Aphrahat thought and wrote, according to Ignatius Ortiz de Urbina,[5] independently of Nicaea, and he did not participate in Greco-Roman development, particularly as concerns Christology. In the year 420, after the orthodoxy of the Iranian Church had been confirmed during Catholicos Yahballāhā's mission to Theodosius II, the decisions of 410 were confirmed and other canonic rules valid in the west were added.[6]

During Yazdgard's latter years, his general tolerance on religious questions, which had also benefited the Jews, changed, and for the Christians there followed a period of more unrest and occasional persecution. The background to this change of attitude may be found in the understanding that seems to have arisen between the king and the Zoroastrian priesthood, the direct consequence being the appointment of the Christians' incarnate enemy, Mihr-Narsēh, as *vuzurg-framātār*. The Christians' religious fanaticism must surely also have been of some importance, although only as an irritant and not as the direct pretext (πρόφασιν). This is indicated by Theodoret (v, 31.1) in his

[1] "*malkā zakāyā wənaṣiḥā*": Chabot, "Synodicon", p. 20, l. 2.

[2] "*kristyānā wabrikā dəmalkē*": J. P. N. Land (ed.), *Anecdota Syriaca* I (Leiden, 1862), 8, ll. 24–5 (fol. 42r).

[3] Chabot, "Synodicon", p. 18, ll. 29, 17; as to Mārūṭā, see Braun, *De sancta Nicaena synodo*, pp. 3ff.

[4] Braun, *Das Buch der Synhados*, p. 7; Canon XII of the synod establishes the supremacy of critical comments on this conception, see Peeters, "La Date du martyre de S. Syméon", p. 26.

[5] "Die Gottheit Christi bei Afrahat", *Orientalia Christiana* XXXI/1(87) (Rome, 1933), 140; in this work great emphasis is placed on the Jewish–Christian element in 'Aphrahat; for critical comments on this conception, see Peeters, "La Date du martyre de S. Syméon", p. 128 n. 4.

[6] Cf. Labourt, *Christianisme*, pp. 100–1.

reference – disapproving, it is true – to Bishop Adbā's (Ἄβδας) destruction of a fire temple (πυρεῖον).[1]

Under Yazdgard's son Bahrām V (421–39), opposition to the Christians intensified in proportion to the growing influence of Mihr-Narsēh. It is probable that the king, who came to power against the wish of the nobility, sought by his very cooperation with this man to secure some good will for himself within the Zoroastrian Church. This is also true if Mihr-Narsēh – as is the opinion of Zaehner[2] – was a supporter of Zurvānism; as regards the hatred of the Christians, there was no disagreement between the Zurvānistic and the orthodox sections of the Zoroastrian Church. Mihr-Narsēh was as much honoured by his fellow countrymen as he was feared by the Christians, not only because of his outstanding statesmanship but also because of his charity and his building activities for the public benefit.[3]

Under these disturbed circumstances and in spite of the peace treaty with Byzantium in 422, which was to secure cultic freedom for the Christians in the Sasanian empire, the Third Synod took place in the year 424. At this synod, Dādīšōʿ was persuaded to resume his functions. During the internal conflicts that had prevented the Iranian Christians from presenting a united and solid front to the outside world when it was most necessary, he had been accused of simony, abuse of office and secession, and had finally renounced his office of catholicos, full of grief and disgust. At the same time the assembled bishops, by emphasizing the autonomy of Iranian Christianity, made the first step towards the establishment of a national church. The right of appeal to the west was annulled, and the catholicos of the Orient (*qatolīqā dəmadnḥā*) was to be responsible only to Christ, who had chosen him and set him at the head of his church.[4] These decisions meant de facto canonical emancipation from Antioch, and in this way the Iranian Church placed itself outside the pentarchy of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.[5] The motivation was not political to any significant extent. Fellowship with the west was not abandoned, and only unconditional

[1] Cf. V, 39, 1: "They [the Persians] call Pyreia the fire temples." As to Abdā and the fire temple, see Bedjan IV, 250–3, and Peeters, "Une Passion arménienne des SS. Abdas, Hormisdas, Sâhîn (Suenes) et Benjamin", *AB* XXVII (1909), 411ff.

[2] *Zurvan*, pp. 40–7.

[3] See, for example, Henning, "The Inscription of Firuzabad", *Asia Major* IV (1954), 100–2 (inscription on a bridge Mihr-Narsēh had himself had built).

[4] Chabot, "Synodicon", p. 51, ll. 25ff.

[5] Cf. Ortiz de Urbina, "Storia e cause dello Scisma della Chiesa di Persia", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* III (Rome, 1937), 456–85.

renunciation of the whole Christian teaching could have been politically effective. The crucial problem had been to find a way of claiming authoritatively, and if necessary enforcing, internal peace without external interference. At the same time, such a development must be seen as resulting from the gradually increasing influence of those Christian Iranians who had grown up in a Zoroastrian environment. The numerous Iranian names of both laymen and clergy in various 5th-century Church documents bear witness to the missionary successes of the Syriac Church among the Sasanians' fellow countrymen.[1]

These successes rekindled the Zoroastrians' already strong aversion to the Christians. Under Bahrām's son and successor, Yazdgard II (439–57), religious fanaticism culminated in the attempt forcibly to convert Christian Armenia (battle of Avarair, 451), the Zoroastrian clergy having an important share in this project and in widespread persecution of all non-Zoroastrian religions, including the Jewish minority.[2] It is significant that under Yazdgard II the chief mōbad (*mōbadān mōbad*), contrary to earlier practice, figures at the head of the official social hierarchy.[3] In spite of all these adversities, the Christian Church continued the course begun at the synod of 424. On this point there was complete unanimity, but otherwise the internal life of the Church was characterized by profound disagreement. At the end of the 5th century, this disagreement may be seen in the hierarchic differences between the rebel Bar Ṣaumā and the highest Church leaders.

Bar Ṣaumā was a ruthless advocate of Nestorianism. Although he himself was despised, his theology was generally approved (cf. below). This is a significant point. The 5th century was the period of the Christological disputes; the time of Nestorianism and Monophysitism, represented by Nestorius who became patriarch of Constantinople in 428, and the power-seeking and severe Cyrillus of Alexandria (d. 444). In fact the two parties desired one thing: to create a sure foundation for the certainty of salvation through Jesus Christ. Each chose his own way, however. On the one hand, Nestorius asserted the independence of *both* natures, the divine as well as the human, in the person of Christ. This he did to such a degree, or at least with such emphasis on the right of human nature, that he considered that Mary could not be called the

[1] Cf. for example I. Guidi, "Ostsyrische Bischöfe und Bischofssitze im V., VI. und VII. Jahrhundert", *ZDMG* XLIII (1889), 397ff.

[2] Cf. O. Klíma, *Mazdak* (Prague, 1957), pp. 43–4.

[3] According to Mas'ūdī; see Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1944), p. 265.

mother of God (θεοτόκος) but merely the mother of Christ. Cyrillus, on the other hand, in his zeal to emphasize the divine side in the person of Christ, completely lost sight of the human, so that Christ in fact had only one nature, the divine, which had totally usurped the human. Cyrillus consequently spoke of a physical unity in which in fact, from the moment Christ became man, only one divine nature was concerned. This is why Mary should and must be called the mother of God. Nestorius, however, taught that there was no unity, but a linking of natures; that is to say, God in all his fullness lived in Jesus Christ the man as in a temple. The only form of unity present was a unity of will, which was gradually perfected in the life of Jesus and reached its climax after his Resurrection. It was not until after the Resurrection that the human nature partook of the immutability and supremacy of God and could then become an object of adoration. This answer to the problem is clearly connected with the difference between the School of Antioch (Nestorius) and the School of Alexandria (Cyrillus), which was also present in the interpretation of Holy Writ. Antioch used the – to some extent modern – historical-philological method and Alexandria the allegorical; the more objective, down-to-earth method contrasted with the subjective, arbitrary method, which could lead anywhere.

From an Iranian–Zoroastrian point of view, the Nestorian solution, i.e. Bar Ṣaumā, would be immediately attractive. It was therefore possible to disavow the person while at the same time acknowledging and fully accepting his theology (see below). There is scarcely any doubt that this special development in the history of the Church must be viewed against the growing contribution from Christian Iranians who, rooted from birth in Sasanian Zoroastrianism, quite naturally had to acknowledge Nestorianism as the most adequate expression for them of the new teaching to which they were attracted. This contribution from Iranians, perhaps particularly from the province of Fārs, the dynastic province, created at the same time the best conditions for the growth of a specifically Iranian, notably anti-ascetic, Christianity which replaced the original, clearly ascetic, Christianity, strongly dominated by Jewish-Christian elements. Bar Ṣaumā, incidentally, had acted with great violence at the Robber Council of Ephesus as a defender and advocate of Nestorianism,[1] and had unscrupulously used his protected position under Pērōz (459–84) to cause the downfall of his enemy Bāboway, the catholicos in office. This conflict was of course strongly disapproved of

[1] See Braun, *Das Buch der Synhados*, pp. 59ff.

by the Church itself.[1] Bar Ṣaumā was, for example, "the damned [*lītā*], who killed 7,000 priests, monks, saints . . . and believers".[2] His name, as a symbol of disgust, was written upside down, particularly in later Jacobite manuscripts, as was often done with Ahriman's name in the Pahlavī literature. A direct consequence was that the decisions of the Synod of Bēt Lāpāṭ in 484, summoned and conducted by Bar Ṣaumā, were not included in the archives with other synodal documents.[3] But this did not prevent the dogmatic decisions of the synod (the Nestorian *constitutio dogmatica* as the only standard for the Iranian Christian Church, and perhaps the abolition of celibacy) being repeated without modification by the later, legitimate synods. The first of these was the Synod of Mār 'Aqaq in 486, which definitely abolished celibacy. This dealt a severe blow to the markedly ascetic Monophysitism, which was concentrated in the monasteries and followed closely in terminology and theology the Nestorian Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia.[4] The second was the Synod of Mār Bābay in 497 which attempted to bring the internal conflicts to an end. There is scarcely any doubt that, in these dogmatic decisions, Bar Ṣaumā intended a political act of loyalty of a defensive character. It was in more or less conscious opposition to anti-Nestorian Constantinople. The theological school established at Nisibis by Narsai – driven out of the "School of the Persians" at Edessa in 457[5] – and by Bar Ṣaumā, underlined this intention. This academy became the theological bulwark against the west. It was the school that "God made to have abundance and to thrive"[6] and its statutes are an important document in cultural history.[7] By this means, more peaceful conditions were certainly created for the Iranian Christians – even when the king's attitude was anti-Christian or indifferent to religion – because the sting was taken out of the use of pseudo-political motives for perse-

[1] He was guided by an "evil will": Chabot, "Synodicon", p. 61, l. 20.

[2] Syriac text in A. Mingana, "The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia and the Far East: A New Document", *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester* IX (1925), 371, ll. 8ff.

[3] Cf. Chabot, "Synodicon", p. 308.

[4] Cf. W. F. Macomber, "The Christology of the Synod of Seleucia–Ctesiphon, A.D. 486", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* XXIV (Rome, 1958), 142–54.

[5] On this date see, however, A. Vööbus, "Un Vestige d'une lettre de Narsaï et son importance historique", *L'Orient Syrien* IX (Paris, 1964), 515–23.

[6] Barḥadbešabbā, "Cause de la fondation des écoles", p. 332; cf. *ibid.* p. 386: "Edessa darkened, Nisibis lit up."

[7] Tr. E. Nestle, "Die Statuten der Schule von Nisibis aus den Jahren 496 und 590", *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* XVIII (Gotha, 1898), 212–29. *Rēšā* was its director; other titles are *məpašəqānā* "commentator, interpres", *maqrəyānā* "magister lectionis", *bādōqā* "examinator, philosophus" and *məhagəyānā* "magister meditationis".

cution. Complete cessation of opposition to the Church was by no means achieved, however. Nestorianism was, after all, Christianity, even though it was the movement that was best able to come to terms with Zoroastrianism. The importance it attached to Christ's true humanness was a natural starting point for those anti-ascetic tendencies underlying the decisions of the synods at the end of the 5th century.[1] But there is reason to believe, on the other hand, that this was a *purely Nestorian* phenomenon, naturally favoured by the Iranian–Zoroastrian mentality, and consequently a breach with the older (pre-Nestorian) and notably positive attitude to asceticism and monasticism.[2] Latest research shows that both were autochthonic and arose impulsively from an inner urge in the individual.[3] It was not until the ascetic ideals were revived in the 6th century that the classical systematics from Egypt (Pachomios) became the ideal, particularly for a man such as Abraham (the Great) of Kāshghar.[4]

Of the ruling Sasanians of the period, both Balāš (484–8) and Jāmāsp are described in Syriac texts (e.g. Joshua the Stylite and the synodal documents) as friendly characters. There is no information, however, concerning the condition of the Christians under Kavād (488–531). But this must have been a comparatively peaceful period even though they doubtless observed with anxiety the good will shown by the king towards the communistic teaching of Mazdak.[5] Allegedly, according to

[1] A good example of the Nestorian attitude towards asceticism and ascetic vanity is given by Thomas of Marga, *The Book of Governors*, ed. E. A. Wallis Budge, II (London, 1893), 330ff.

[2] Cf. Spuler, "Die nestorianische Kirche", pp. 126ff.

[3] Particularly Vööbus, "The Origin of Monasticism"; *idem*, *History of Asceticism*; but already Labourt emphasizes the genesis independent of Egypt in his *Christianisme*, pp. 28ff, 302ff. For Vööbus, the Manichaeans had a decisive influence on asceticism and monasticism in Iran. The Manichaeans, however, were hardly a very desirable ideal for the Christians in such an important matter. A text such as Augustine, *De moribus man.* xx,74, unambiguously states that Manichaean monasticism was considered a foreign element in the west; cf. Asmussen, *X^uāstvānīft*, p. 260. The so-called *bənay qəyāmā* "Sons of the Covenant" are a special phenomenon in east Syrian literature. They devoted themselves to a life of abstinence according to certain ascetic rules, but their position within the Church itself is not quite clear. The Acts of the synods appear to consider them as a category among the clerics, although in one place (Chabot, "Synodicon", pp. 159, 418, Canon XXVIII) they refer to "Clerics" (*qlryq'*) in the heading but in the actual text to "Clerics and Sons of the Covenant" (*qlryq' wbny qym'*). This *could* mean that *bənay qəyāmā* and *bənath qəyāmā* simply indicated Christians generally; cf. Vööbus, "The Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for the History of Early Christianity", *Yearbook of the Estonian Learned Society in America* II, *1954-1958* (New York, 1958), 58ff ("*benai qeyama* and *benath qeyama*, i.e. the covenanters as the full members of the Church", p. 59).

[4] Cf. Labourt, pp. 315ff.

[5] Cf. Christensen, *Le Règne du roi Kawādh I et le communisme mazdakite* (Copenhagen, 1925), and Klíma, *op. cit.*

this teaching,[1] women, children and estate were communal property.[2] The condition of the Church under Khusrau I (531–79), Hormizd IV (579–90) and Khusrau II (591–628) was marked once again by unrest. Under Khusrau I ("the second Cyrus" *kwrš*)[3] the internal peace was rent by the split between the two rival patriarchs. It explains the reactionary tendency characterizing the synod held by Mār Abā in 544[4] and was expressed, inter alia, by the reintroduction of celibacy.[5] In 562 religious freedom for the Christians was fixed by treaty upon condition that any form of proselytism was punishable by death. As secession from Zoroastrianism appears to have been tolerated until then,[6] this stipulation should probably be viewed in the light of Khusrau's religious zeal. Several "Acts of Martyrs", particularly from that period, point in the same direction. The codification of the stipulation was not unexpected, but followed naturally from normal practice. Canon I of the Synod of 554, for example, held by the catholicos Joseph[7] whose susceptibilities were by no means beyond reproach, took it for granted that conversion to Christianity was punishable.[8] The favourable conditions under Hormizd IV (579–90), whose tolerance is testified to by Ṭabarī, ended in the time of Khusrau II, when Monophysitism became more manifest under the protection of Shīrīn,[9] one of the "great king's" two Christian wives, and her physician-in-ordinary,[10] Gabriel. Internal conflicts, in part directly associated with this new theological constellation, weakened Nestorianism without, however, breaking it. These conflicts were already perceptible at Mār Hazeqiel's synod in 576[11] and increased in strength at Išōʿyahb's in 585,[12] Sabrīšō's in 596[13] and Grigor's

[1] "*dāt-i mazdākīh*": *The Bundahishn*, ed. E. T. D. Anklesaria (Bombay, 1908), p. 215, l. 10; tr. B. T. Anklesaria (Bombay, 1956), pp. 276–7.

[2] "*zan ut frazand ut xʷāstak pat hamīh ut hambagīh apāyēt dāštan*", p. 215, ll. 11–12.

[3] Chabot, "Synodicon", p. 29, l. 30.

[4] As to this and the theological conflicts, see Peeters, "Observations sur la vie syriaque de Mar Aba, catholicos de l'église perse 540–552", *Studi e testi* cxxv (Vatican City, 1946), 69-112.

[5] Braun, *Das Buch der Synhados*, p. 95; cf. J. Dauvillier, *Le Droit chaldéen* (Paris, 1939), pp. 30ff; Mār Abā's marriage laws are edited by Sachau in *Syrische Rechtsbücher* III, 258–85.

[6] Sachau, "Von den rechtlichen Verhältnissen", pp. 74ff.

[7] Cf. Labourt, pp. 192ff.

[8] Chabot, "Synodicon", p. 356.

[9] Cf. "Chronicon anonymum" in Guidi, *Chronica Minora*, Part I, text, p. 17, ll. 22–3, tr., p. 16, l. 35: "the Aramaean woman Šīrīn and the Roman woman Maryam". The romantic relationship between Khusrau and Shīrīn is used abundantly as a poetical motif in classical New Persian literature, particularly by Niẓāmī (12th century) and Amīr Khusrau (1253–1325).

[10] "*drwstbd*" (*durustbad*): Guidi, text, p. 19, l. 10, tr., p. 18, l. 1.

[11] Chabot, "Synodicon", pp. 368ff.

[12] *Ibid.* pp. 390ff.

[13] *Ibid.* pp. 456ff.

in 605,[1] when an interregnum in the line of catholicos occurred. This lasted until the death of Khusrau in 628, followed by the induction of Išō'yahb II. At about the same time, however, Mārūṭā of Tagrīt (d. 649) finally built up a Monophysitic hierarchy in Iran, and in recognition of this he was given the title of *Mafrəyānā* ("ordinator, fecundator") of Antioch.[2] The Iranian Christian Church ("the party of the Orthodox", *'rtdwks'*)[3] had to exert its full strength to suppress the constantly increasing power of these "heretics".[4] But soon the Church, and in particular the Sasanian empire, had other things to think about. In 637, the Arabs under Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ entered Seleucia–Ctesiphon, and the last Sasanian, Yazdgard III, was reduced to the wandering existence of a refugee. He died in 651 in the Marv area where, according to tradition, he was murdered by a greedy miller with whom he had sought asylum. According to a report by Tha'ālibī, a Christian bishop is said to have made arrangements for his burial.[5]

The coming of Islam was not, however, synonymous with the disappearance of Nestorianism; towards the east, in Central Asia, Chinese Turkestan, and in China proper, Nestorianism made considerable progress. The Envoy A-lo-pen appeared at Court in the capital Chang-an in 635, and three years later a monastery was founded in the same place. There is every probability that this mission, whose effect in Central Asia is documented inter alia by the Sogdian translations of biblical, martyrological and other texts,[6] was inspired in the first instance by Rēv-Ardashīr. At a very early date, particularly in the time of Bishop Ma'nā at the end of the 5th century, efforts may be traced to create a Christian Persian literature. In the Middle Iranian texts, the Christians are called *tarsākān* (Sogdian *trs'qt*) "those who fear [God]", which immediately makes one think of the New Testament's φοβούμενοι (τὸν θεόν), "they that fear (God)" (= σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν). After a decidedly miserable existence under the Umayyads, Christianity experienced a prolific

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 471ff. One of the more prominent trouble-makers was Henānā of Adiabene, who was known for his Monophysitic sympathies and originistic aberrations; cf. Widengren, "Researches in Syrian Mysticism", *Numen* VIII (Leiden, 1961), 161ff.

[2] Concerning the Monophysitic advance in Iran as from that time, see Dauvillier, "L'Expansion de l'église syrienne en Asie Centrale et en Extrême-Orient", L'Orient Syrien I (Paris, 1956), 76ff.

[3] "*'rtdwks'*": Guidi, text, p. 19, l. 15, tr., p. 18, l. 5.

[4] "*heretīqā*": *ibid.* text, p. 19, l. 14, tr., p. 18, l. 5.

[5] Cf. Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 508.

[6] See O. Hansen, "Die christliche Literatur der Soghdier", *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur im Mainz, Jahrbuch* (1951), pp. 296ff.

renaissance under the ʿAbbāsids, outwardly manifested by the movement of the headquarters of the Church from Seleucia–Cteṣiphon to Baghdad in 762. It was not until Tīmūr's destructive ravaging at the end of the 14th century that Iranian Christianity was reduced to insignificant small enclaves in isolated areas.

CHAPTER 26

BUDDHISM AMONG IRANIAN PEOPLES

The historical Buddha, Śākyamuni, lived in north-east India in the 6th to 5th century B.C. He died at the age of eighty in about 483 B.C., leaving no written records of his teaching. At that time, northern India was dominated by the kingdoms Avanti, Kosala, Vatsa and Magadha. In the north-west, Gandhāra was a province of the Achaemenian empire. In the 4th century the Achaemenian empire fell to the all-conquering Alexander, who came in person to north-west India, the furthest east he ventured. The Indian parts of the Achaemenian empire had in practice under the last Achaemenians recovered their independence. Alexander's control of these regions, which he conquered during 327–324 B.C., was short-lived. His death in 323 B.C. was followed by widespread disaffection in the east. The Indian emperor Chandragupta annexed the Indian kingdoms of the Punjab in 317 B.C. Seleucus Nicator attempted to regain all the possessions lost, but he was not exactly successful, and he was obliged to negotiate with Chandragupta about 304 B.C.

During this period of nearly two hundred years after the death of Śākyamuni, his followers were active in establishing the canonical scriptures and the religious rules for daily life among Buddhist communities. Despite the considerable number and variety of literary sources concerning the events which occurred during this process, few details can be regarded as having any marked degree of authenticity. Prominent in the sources are the events concerning two councils held in order to obtain some measure of agreement among the Buddha's followers. These are generally said to be the council of Rājagṛha, capital of Magadha, and the council of Vaiśālī, the modern village of Basrah. The council of Rājagṛha took place, according to tradition, in the year of Śākyamuni's death, that is, about 483 B.C., while the council of Vaiśālī followed after an interval of 100 or 110 years. A basic codification of the Buddha's teachings was evidently effected, but unanimity seems never to have been attained. The Buddhist community was eventually divided into numerous sects, and the accounts of the councils show that the seeds of this discord were present from the

beginning. The main reason for the discrepancies in our accounts of the councils is that they have come down to us directly or indirectly through the different schools, which all tried to prove that their particular canon went back to the beginnings of the community. Not only do we have works or parts of works belonging to the canons of various schools but we find them written in different languages, principally Pāli, Buddhist Sanskrit, and North-west Prākrit. Pāli was the Prākrit spoken in Magadha.

From 324 to 187 B.C. most of India was ruled by the Maurya dynasty, whose first king was Chandragupta. Like his son and successor, Bindusāra, he supported the brahmins. Of Bindusāra and his reign we have little knowledge, but his memory was in any case eclipsed by the grandeur of his own son and successor, Aśoka, who acceded to the throne in about 268 B.C. Aśoka's sole conquest was that of Kaliṅga (Orissa) in about 260 B.C. The frightful massacre that occurred filled him with sorrow, and he resolved to refrain thereafter from violence. He accordingly took the vows of an *upāsaka* or lay Buddhist. This event was of momentous importance for the subsequent history of Buddhism. Indeed, it is largely as a result of Aśoka's patronage that Buddhism became eventually a major world religion instead of remaining a minor Hindu sect.

We know much of Aśoka's reign from his own inscriptions, which have been found in widely distant parts of his kingdom. Some thirty-nine inscriptions are currently known. Most famous are the so-called Rock Edicts and Pillar Edicts. The inscriptions are of varied content but consistently promulgate the ethical standards of Buddhist teaching which he wished to inculcate. They are mostly inscribed in the local Prākrits using Brāhmī script, although in the north-west the Kharoṣṭhī script, derived from Aramaic writing, was used for two of his edicts. The Aramaic language itself (recently termed "Aramaeo-Indian" and "Aramaeo-Iranian" in connection with these Aśoka inscriptions) was used for five inscriptions from the north-west. One of these, discovered only in 1958, was the remarkable bilingual inscription from Qandahār in Afghanistan. Its two languages are Greek and Aramaic. The use of Aramaic and of the Kharoṣṭhī script indicates Iranian influence, and even the two rock edicts written in Prākrit in Kharoṣṭhī script at Shāhbāzgaṛhī and Mānsehrā contain Iranian loan-words. It is in this border region including Iranian territory under Greek control and Indian territory, where Indians, Greeks and Iranians lived side by side,

that we see the very first indications that Buddhism was to be adopted by non-Indian peoples.

This attempt to spread the knowledge of Buddhism was a deliberate policy adopted by Aśoka. He tells in his edicts of the appointing of religious officials (*dharma-mahāmātra*), who were to be dispatched to distant parts to make the doctrine known. In the north-west the Yonas, Kambojas and Gandhārans were to receive missionaries. Recent discoveries have confirmed that A. Foucher[1] was correct in deducing that the Maurya empire must have extended in the north-west to the Hindu Kush, and to the west as far as Aria and Sīstān. The Yonas were the Greeks who lived together with the Iranian Kambojas. One of the Yonas, Tuṣāspa, even had an Iranian name. In 1963 a long inscription entirely in Greek was found in Qandahār. It was subsequently identified as a translation of parts of two of Aśoka's edicts.

Visible evidence of the flourishing of Buddhism in the north-west under Aśoka is provided by the remains of his considerable building activity. Aśoka was credited by popular legend with the erection of eighty-four thousand *stūpas*. The stūpas of the time of Aśoka and his immediate successors were markedly distinct in style from those built later under the Kushāns. This difference had already been noticed by the famous 7th-century Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-tsang, who observed a large number of stūpas in the Aśokan style in the north-west, e.g. three at Takṣaśilā (Taxila), two in Uḍḍiyāna, five in Gandhāra, three near Nagarahāra (Jelālābād), dozens in Jāguḍa (near Qandahār) and even one at Kāpiśī (Begram).

Despite the favourable conditions for Buddhism under Aśoka, the old controversies continued to rage. Although the council of Pāṭaliputra (Patna), at which Aśoka is said to have intervened, is of doubtful historicity, it was nevertheless during Aśoka's reign that the final split came between the Sthaviras, the conservative party descended from the followers of the Elder Kāśyapa, who had pleaded the conservative cause at the council of Rājagṛha, and the majority liberal and democratic party known as the Mahāsāṅghikas. It was out of the former that the Theravāda later developed and out of the latter the Mahāyāna.

Late traditions associated the foundation of Khotan with the son and the minister of Aśoka, and although the traditions are late and discordant in detail, they are likely to be correct in outline. Certainly in the 1st century B.C., when our first records of the history of Khotan

[1] *La Vieille Route* II, 271.

begin, in the Early Han Annals, Khotan was clearly divided in two halves, no doubt the Indian and the Chinese colonies. Buddhism could have been first taken to Khotan by the Aśokan settlers, but the late Tibetan text *Li yul luṅ-bstan-pa* specifically states that it was introduced 165 years after the origin of Khotan, that is about 84 B.C.[1] It is generally considered that even that date is rather early for Buddhism to have been established in Khotan, but it is not entirely impossible. A Yüeh-chih seems to have instructed a Chinese in Buddhism as early as 2 B.C., and É. Chavannes[2] was of the opinion – which has been challenged – that Buddhism was already an established religion in China in A.D. 65.

The Maurya dynasty was followed in India by the weak rule of the Śuṅga (187–175 B.C.) and Kāṇva (75–30 B.C.) dynasties, which favoured a Hindu Viṣṅuite sect. Puṣyamitra (187–151 B.C.), founder of the Śuṅga dynasty, was notorious according to Buddhist sources as the persecutor of their religion. But the Greek king of Bactria, Demetrius (Dharmamitra), was able to profit from the weak Indian rule by taking Gandhāra, the Punjab, and the Indus valley, while his brother Apollodotus took Ujjayinī and Bharukaccha (Broach), and his general Menander besieged Pāṭaliputra. In the west Eucratides defeated Demetrius but lost Bactria to the Parthians. In the east Buddhism gained in Menander a powerful patron if not a convert. A grateful Buddhist immortalized him in the *Milinda-pañha*, the "Questions of Menander".

Despite the difficulties met by Buddhism during this period, it seems to have flourished, and it is to this period that an important development in Buddhist sculpture belongs. The main monuments are from central India, especially Bhārhūt, Bodh-Gayā and Sāñcī, but bas-reliefs from Amarāvatī betray the same influence at work in Āndhra. Characteristic of the style is the depiction of the Buddha's former lives (*jātakas*) by means of an unsophisticated technique, especially in the representation of the human figure. Nevertheless, Iranian and Greek influences are discernible.

The political history of eastern Iran and north-west India from roughly 200 B.C. to A.D. 100 is extremely complex and beset with major difficulties of interpretation. The main participants in the constant changes of power were the Parthians, the Sakas of various kinds and the Kushāns. With these last it is usual to link the tribe known to the Chinese as the Great Yüeh-chih, who are said to have moved west after their defeat by the Hsiung-nu (Huns) in 176 B.C. The Parthians

[1] Emmerick, *Tibetan texts*, p. 23.
[2] *T'oung Pao* VI (1905), p. 550, n. 1.

and the Sakas were Iranian by race and spoke Iranian languages. The language of the Kushāns, nowadays usually called Bactrian, was also Iranian, but the ethnic origin of the Kushāns is a matter of dispute. All three, during periods of rule in India, came under the influence of Buddhism having previously been susceptible to the influence of Greek civilization. All three used Greek script on their coins and showed elements of Greek style in works of art. All three seem to have maintained a policy of tolerance towards all religions. The Sakas in particular actively encouraged the Buddhists in the restoration of their religious monuments. The Parthian Gondophares is said to have welcomed even the Apostle Thomas to his court.

From about 50 B.C. until about A.D. 700 in India, the Buddhists practised rock-hewn architecture. They hollowed out of rock *caitya* halls and *vihāras*, imitating their originals with great accuracy. They adorned these grottoes with paintings and sculptures. This technique was not peculiar to the Buddhists, although it reached its highest form of development at their hands. It has been suggested that the idea of rock-hewn architecture reached India from Iran, where the rock-hewn tombs of Darius and his successors were famous. Even in India the earliest grottoes were hewn in Aśokan times not by Buddhists but by the Ājīvikas, and in Orissa there are Jain grottoes of the 1st century B.C. The most famous of the Indian grottoes are those of Ajaṇṭā, which contains early grottoes of the first years of our era as well as more elaborate Gupta or post-Gupta grottoes. But there are other places with grottoes of equal antiquity: Bhājā, Kondāne, Pitalkhorā, Junnar, Bedsā, Nāsik, Kārli and Kānheri. Some of these have inscriptions which confirm this dating. These inscriptions are also of some importance for the information they give concerning the various Buddhist sects. For, by the beginning of our era, the dissensions among the Buddhists had resulted in the formation of a large number of different sects. In many cases, however, they seem to have used the same shrines. According to the evidence of inscriptions the main divisions were the Sarvāstivādins and their subdivisions and the Mahāsāṅghikas and their subdivisions. The Sarvāstivādins were firmly established in the north-west, while the Mahāsāṅghikas had their principal seat in Āndhra. Nevertheless, they were all widely spread, and we find for example an inscription of the reign of Huvishka (Huviška) in the 2nd century A.D. concerning a vihāra of the Mahāsāṅghikas at Wardak near Kabul.

Buddhist rock-hewn architecture spread far from India. Among

Iranians, the most famous example is to be found at Bāmiyān in Afghanistan. The colossal rock-hewn Buddhas, thirty-five metres and fifty-three metres tall respectively, impressed Hsüan-tsang in the 7th century. They seem to have been first mentioned in the west by Thomas Hyde in A.D. 1700. One of the Buddhas at nearby Kakrak shows links both with the Kushāns and the Sasanians. But some of the grottoes at Bāmiyān show a simpler style and were no doubt constructed before Sasanian influence became noticeable. Some of the frescoes are considered to be among the earliest specimens of Buddhist painting.

To the east, the most famous Buddhist rock-hewn architecture and cave-paintings are at Tun-huang in China. An inscription provides evidence that the "Caves of the Thousand Buddhas" (Ch'ien-fo-tung) were begun in A.D. 366, and we have, still extant, Sogdian letters of A.D. 313, which indicate that there were considerable numbers of Sogdians in Tun-huang at that time. We have no direct evidence of their participation in the work, but many of the portraits of donors are Central Asian, not Chinese, in style and dress. Less well known are the cave shrines at Wan Fo Hsia about seventy miles north-east of Tun-huang. There were Sogdians also at Lo-yang, near which are the Buddhist caves of Lung Men dating from about A.D. 500. Central Asian influence is clear in the early work at the caves of Yün Kang in north China (A.D. 460–94).

The most important royal patron of Buddhism in India after Aśoka was undoubtedly the Kushān king Kanishka (Kaniška). With him, appropriately enough, a new era in Indian history began; but unfortunately the most difficult of all the complex historical problems with which the historian of India must grapple has proved to be to determine the date at which his era began. After two London conferences on the subject, one in 1913, the second in 1960, scholars still vary by nearly two centuries in their results, that is, between A.D. 78 and A.D. 244. Recently A. D. H. Bivar[1] has made out a strong case for A.D. 128.

It is likely that Kanishka's patronage of Buddhism did not proceed from his conversion but from his tolerance. He is remembered everywhere in Buddhist sources as a second Aśoka, and Aśokan-type legends grew up about him. According to the reports of Chinese pilgrims, Kanishka erected a great stūpa outside Peshawar. In fact, in 1908 archaeologists found at Shāh-jī-kī Ḍherī the remains of a large stūpa

[1] "Hāritī and the Chronology of the Kuṣāṇas". See also pp. 200ff.

and within it a relic casket bearing a short Kharoṣṭhī inscription, which appears at any rate to bear the name Kanishka. A monastery was built by Kanishka at Kāpiśī (Begram), in order, according to Hsüan-tsang, to house foreign hostages in the summer. J. Meunié[1] has shown that this monastery is likely to be the one which he excavated at Shotorak near Begram. The first unmistakable image of the Buddha to be found on coins can be seen on a coin of Kanishka. But the Kanishkan coins, as is well known, include a varied pantheon and seem to indicate that he favoured Zoroastrian deities as much as any.

The traditions which associate Kanishka with the famous Buddhist authors Aśvaghoṣa, Mātṛceṭa and Vasubandhu, as well as with the well-known physician Caraka, are of little value. Even a Buddhist council is attributed to Kanishka's auspices as a parallel to the alleged council of Pāṭaliputra under Aśoka. What, however, is not in doubt is that under Kanishka Buddhism flourished and spread as never before. Indeed, it appears to have reached the limits of the Kushān empire and even beyond.

Associated closely with the spread of Buddhism under the Kushāns are the development of the Mahāyāna and the development of the style of Buddhist art known as "Gandhāran". These developments were no doubt closely connected with each other. It seems probable that both arose from the contact between Greek, Iranian and Indian influences in the north-west. The most noticeable characteristic of the Gandhāran style in art is the representation in human form of the Buddha, whose person had previously been considered beyond the reach of artists. It is characteristic also of Mahāyānist Buddhism that the historical Buddha Śākyamuni should be regarded as only one of many Buddhas and hence less regarded as an almost unattainable ideal.

Other connections between the rise of the Mahāyāna and Gandhāran art have often been noted. The increasing prominence of the layman is reflected in the common portrayal of laymen in art. One of the most famous episodes that became commonly represented in the Kushān period is the giving of food to the Buddha by the two merchant brothers Trapusa and Bhallika. They were depicted in Indo-Scythian dress and bearded in a 2nd-century relief at Shotorak. Bhallika was early associated with Balkh.

The cult of the Bodhisattva is also reflected in Gandhāran art. The ideal of the Bodhisattva in the Mahāyāna supplanted the ideal of the

[1] "Le Couvent des otages chinois de Kaniṣka au Kāpiśa", *JA* CCXXXIV (1943–5), 151–62.

Arhat. The most famous of the Bodhisattvas commonly represented in the Kushān period is the future Buddha Maitreya. His rise to prominence has often been associated with the contemporary belief in the Messiah among the Jews and the soteriology of the Zoroastrian future saviour Saošyant. In the Mahāyānist conception of the Bodhisattvas Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara, who subsequently became enormously popular in the east, the influence of the Iranian Zurvān and Mithra has been detected.

The Kushāns controlled the famous caravan route that proceeded from Taxila via Bāmiyān to Balkh and thence to Tirmidh on the Afghan border. This route was of considerable economic importance, as attested by the numerous finds of coins and other hoards such as the rich collection of fine bronzes and beautiful glassware discovered at Kāpiśī (Begram). It was by this route too that Buddhism reached Central Asia and maintained contact with India. All along the route and to the east of it there have been found archaeological remains of Kushān Buddhist occupation. We have already had occasion to mention the rock-hewn monuments of Bāmiyān and the monastery of Kanishka at Shotorak. Buddhist stūpas at Kushān sites include those at Wardak, thirty miles west of Kabul, those around Kāpiśī, the Hadda and Bīmarān stūpas in the Jelālābād district, ancient Nagarahāra, and the Tepe-i Rustam outside Balkh. On the Russian side of the Afghan border are the sites of Tirmidh (Dharmamitra) and nearby Airtam, where Russian expeditions have found Buddhist remains of the Kushān period. The most interesting are the Airtam frieze and the cave monastery at Kara Tepe.

East of the main caravan route is the renowned site of Surkh Kotal, the ancient Baghlān mentioned by Hsüan-tsang. It was here that a major Kushān inscription was found written in a north-east Iranian language which is nowadays called Bactrian. The inscription concerns the restoration of the sanctuary founded there by Kanishka. The site seems to have no Buddhist connections, but like Buddhist sites elsewhere it seems to have suffered from the attacks of the Sasanians in the 3rd century.

In fact, the Sasanians overran most of Afghanistan during the 3rd century, but although the Buddhists were persecuted and many of their sanctuaries were fired, they clearly survived to a much later period. Buddhist activity seems to have continued at such places as Bāmiyān and Hadda until as late as the 8th or 9th century. But the

Sasanians were not the only persecutors of the Buddhists. Even more destructive were the Hephthalites or White Huns, who, after occupying Sogdiana about A.D. 440, overwhelmed Gandhāra and invaded central India at the end of the 5th century. They in turn were defeated by the more tolerant T'u-chüeh (Turks). The final demise of Buddhism in eastern Iran and Afghanistan was caused by the rise of Islam and the Arab invasions from the 7th century onwards. The rulers of Bāmiyān gave their allegiance to Islam in the latter part of the 8th century and by the end of the 9th Buddhism in Bāmiyān was at an end.

How far west Buddhism spread in Iran we do not know. On the basis of archaeology it seems possible to infer that it never flourished west of the line joining Balkh to Qandahār, the so-called "Foucher line". The Russian discovery of a Buddhist stūpa at Gyaur Kala near Bairam 'Alī more than four hundred kilometres west of Balkh in the Marv oasis is hardly sufficient evidence to induce us to consider that Buddhism was ever very prominent further west. The common adage often applied to the spread of Buddhism to the east is relevant to the west: one swallow does not make a summer. Moreover, after Zoroastrianism had become the official religion of the Sasanians in A.D. 224, other religions were not tolerated, as we know from the inscriptional evidence of Kartīr. Consequently, it is only to be expected that Buddhism should have expanded eastwards rather than to the west. It seems indeed that the building of the Gyaur Kala stūpa was interrupted in the 3rd century and destroyed in the 5th.

We are fortunate in having some idea of the strength and character of Buddhism in Gandhāra and the north-west as a result of the information provided by the two famous Chinese pilgrims Fa-hsien and Hsüan-tsang. Fa-hsien, who set out from Ch'ang-an in China in A.D. 399, mentions only adherents of the Hīnayāna between Kāshghar and Nagarahāra. He noted a number of stūpas on the way, coming across a particularly large number around Nagarahāra. There were many monks at Darel, Gandhāra and Peshawar. One monastery near Nagarahāra had more than seven hundred monks. By the time of Hsüan-tsang, in the 7th century, the Mahāyāna had made great progress in this area. Mahāyānists were especially numerous in Kapiśa, Uḍḍiyāna and Ghazna. There were, however, many monasteries and monks of the Hīnayāna in Balkh and Bāmiyān. With this report accord the manuscript finds at Gyaur Kala and at Bāmiyān. The manuscript from Gyaur Kala is thought to belong to the Sarvāstivādins. A fragment of

the Vinaya of the Mahāsāṅghikas was found in the caves of Bāmiyān. In fact, Hsüan-tsang noted many Lokottaravādins, followers of a subdivision of the Mahāsāṅghikas, in Bāmiyān. We have also the testimony of an 8th-century Korean traveller, Huei-ch'ao, concerning these regions. In his time the T'u-chüeh (Turks) were almost everywhere in command, but they had adopted Buddhism like their subjects. He recorded many monks and monasteries in most places. There were Mahāyānists in Uḍḍiyāna, Lampāka and Zābulistān, Hīnayānists in Kāpiśī, Balkh (under the Arabs), Khuttal and Wakhān, and both together at Bāmiyān under an Iranian ruler.

Whether Kanishka extended his dominion east beyond the Pamirs we do not know. Certainly there were Yüeh-chih in the Tarim basin from the 2nd century B.C., and Chinese and other sources provide information of uncertain significance concerning their relations with Yüeh-chih in the west. S. Konow[1] has found few followers in his attempt to show that Kanishka was a member of the royal family of Khotan, and rising to power in Khotan, invaded India from there. This hypothesis depended largely on his interpretation of a passage in the Tibetan *Li yul lun-bstan-pa*.[2] But the passage in question hardly bears this interpretation. There, the Khotan king Vijaya Kīrti is associated with Kanishka's capture of So-ked (Śāketa) merely in order to explain how genuine relics could be found in the stūpa of Sru-ño. Vijaya Kīrti may, of course, have supplied Kanishka with a token force to ensure good relations and Kanishka may have repaid him with some relics. But there is nothing here to impel us to think that Kanishka had any closer connection with Khotan or even that he did not set out on his expedition from Gandhāra rather than from Khotan.

Nevertheless, there is abundant evidence of Kushān influence in the Tarim basin. We have only to recall the use of a north-west Prākrit, written in the Kharoṣṭhī script, for administrative purposes as well as for the transmission of Buddhist texts. The Kharoṣṭhī documents from the kingdom of Shan-shan, a short distance east of Khotan, show clearly that Buddhism was well established there. If these documents are dated approximately to between A.D. 220 and A.D. 320, as has been recently argued (although an earlier date may be possible), Buddhism may well have been introduced during the first years of Kanishka's reign. Fa-hsien estimated that about A.D. 400 there were more than four thousand Hīnayānist monks in Shan-shan.

[1] *Kharoshṭhī Inscriptions*, pp. lxxvff. [2] Emmerick, *Tibetan texts*, p. 47.

The importance of the north-west Prākrit, often nowadays termed Gāndhārī, is only comparatively recently being realized. Not only has it left its mark on the main languages of Central Asia, especially in the form of loan-words, but it seems to have been used as the language of many of the earliest Buddhist texts translated into Chinese. The only Buddhist text written in Gāndhārī which survives is the *Dharmapada*, found in the vicinity of Khotan. But deductions can be made concerning the source of the Chinese translations from a study of the method of transcribing Indian words. It seems, however, difficult to see how it is possible to be sure that the source is not rather a Central Asian language, such as Khotanese, with numerous north-west Prākrit loans. A Kharoṣṭhī well inscription in the north-west Prākrit was found at Lo-yang in China. It may date from the second half of the 2nd century A.D. Even in the early years of the 3rd century there were at least two monasteries in Lo-yang and many foreign translators were active in Lo-yang in the second half of the 2nd century.

Some of the early translations of Buddhist texts into Chinese have been attributed to Yüeh-chih, a term which seems to have been applied to some of the inhabitants of the Shan-shan kingdom. Prominent among the early translators were Iranians: Parthians, Sogdians and Khotanese. There were also some early Kuchean translators.

Evidence has been found of the early existence of Buddhism at Miran, south of Lob Nor, almost certainly part of the kingdom of Shan-shan. There a sanctuary with a stūpa inside it was excavated by Aurel Stein. The sanctuary contained wall-paintings which had been preserved by the sand. Some of them depict scenes from the life of Viśvantara. These paintings have been assigned on stylistic grounds to the 3rd or even the 2nd century A.D., and the existence of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions would be compatible with this date. One of the painters seems to have been named Tita, which is thought to be an adaptation of Latin Titus.

Kushān influence is known to have spread northwards into Chorasmia and Sogdiana, but it seems doubtful whether these regions were ever under Kushān rule. Nor is there much evidence of Buddhism in these regions in the Kushān period. The fact that some of the early translators of Buddhist scriptures were of Sogdian origin, such as K'ang (Samarqand) Meng Hsiang, who worked at Lo-yang from A.D. 194 to 199, can hardly be regarded, in my opinion, as evidence for the early establishment of Buddhism in Sogdiana. Nor has archaeology brought

to light any early Buddhist monuments north of the Oxus region (Tirmidh, Airtam etc.). The sites excavated at Varakhsha, near Bukhārā, Afrāsiyāb and Panjikent, near Samarqand, are conspicuously non-Buddhist, while the Buddhist sites further east at Adzhina Tepe near Kurgan-Tyube, at Kuva in Farghāna and at Ak-Beshim near Frunze all belong to the 7th or 8th century. Even at this date Buddhism cannot have been of much importance around the capital as the sites near Bukhārā and Samarqand show clearly enough. Hsüan-tsang in the 7th century found little Buddhist following in Samarqand, and despite his claim to conversions there, when the Korean pilgrim Huei-ch'ao visited Samarqand early in the 8th century, he found only a solitary Buddhist monastery with a solitary monk. Everywhere Zoroastrianism was practised. Moreover, there is hardly a trace of Buddhism in the 8th-century Sogdian documents from Mount Mugh.

It is true that according to the T'ang Annals the Sogdians were adherents not only of Zoroastrianism but also of Buddhism. But the various parts of Sogdiana are listed and described as a whole, whereas Buddhism may have been prominent only in the eastern regions such as the vicinity of Shih (Tashkent), which is specifically included. Moreover, the inadequacy of this account is reflected in the omission of any mention of either the Manichaeans or the Nestorian Christians. The failure to mention the former is particularly noticeable as Manichaeism was recognized as the national religion of the Sogdians in the edict issued against Manichaeism by the Chinese emperor Hsüan-tsung in A.D. 732.

It is well known that Manichaeism has absorbed many elements of Buddhism. Mānī (A.D. 215–74) was no doubt impressed by Buddhism during his year in the north-west of India. But the introduction of Indian Buddhist terms into some of the Manichaean Parthian texts makes it likely that they were composed in one of the centres where Manichaeism and Buddhism flourished side by side. Such a centre, indeed the most notable centre, was Balkh from the 3rd to the 8th century A.D. The Sogdian Manichaean texts on the other hand all come from the Turfān region in Chinese Turkestan, whither the Manichaeans had fled from the Arabs. In this region also, Manichaeism coexisted with Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Buddhism.

Other pieces of evidence confirm the hypothesis set forth above that Buddhism was not of major significance in central Sogdiana. Thus, the Buddhist Sogdian texts from sites where Sogdians lived along the

northern route to China are comparatively late. We know that there were colonies of Sogdian merchants in such places as Lo-yang in the heart of China at a much earlier date and that Sogdians were occupied in translating Buddhist texts into Chinese. Now, the Buddhist sites north of the Takla Makan were mostly Hīnayānist: Kāshghar, Aqsu, Qarashahr, Kuchā. But not only are most of the Buddhist texts written in Sogdian Mahāyānist, they are almost entirely translations from Chinese. If Buddhism had been long established in Sogdiana we would expect to have found translations of Hīnayānist works made from Indian into Sogdian.

According to the testimony of Huei-ch'ao, in Kuchā, the local population followed the Hīnayāna, as is borne out by the texts surviving in the Kuchean language, while the Chinese community practised the Mahāyāna. We have a solitary case of a fragment of a translation of an unidentified Buddhist text from Kuchean into Sogdian. The Kuchean translations of the same period were made from Indian originals.

We must accordingly presume that, on the whole, the Sogdian Buddhists were converted to Mahāyāna Buddhism by the Chinese, whose language they had learnt for the sake of trade. They did not bring Buddhism with them from their homeland and they could speak no Indian language. In isolated cases they may have learnt Hīnayāna Buddhism from speakers of other Central Asian languages.

At the beginning of the Christian era the main towns along the northern route, Kuchā, Qarashahr (earlier Yen-ch'i) and the towns of the Turfān region, were mainly occupied by people who spoke the so-called Tocharian language. But Chinese influence in the Turfān region goes back to the 1st century B.C. when they founded Kao-ch'ang (Qochō), which was the chief town of the Turfān region during most of its history. Buddhism came early to all these regions, and Kucheans were among the early translators of Buddhist texts into Chinese. The most famous, though not the earliest of these, was Kumārajīva (A.D. 344–413), whose father was Indian but whose mother was Kuchean.

The archaeological remains of the region belong mainly to the 4th to 8th century. In many places there are examples of Buddhist rock-hewn architecture, as at Qïzïl and Qumtura in the Kuchā region, at Qarashahr and at Toyuq in the Turfān region. Chinese influence is in many places clearly evident in the painting.

Qochō was a religious centre of great importance. It was early a haven of Buddhism, and Buddhism continued there long after it had

disappeared from most of Chinese and western Turkestan. Even in A.D. 1420 there were reportedly many Buddhists and great temples in Qochō. Earlier, a Chinese traveller of the 10th century noticed Buddhist temples of T'ang date as well as temples belonging to the Manichaeans and others, either Zoroastrians or Nestorians. We have evidence that Sogdians of Buddhist, Manichaean and Christian beliefs lived in Qochō from about the 5th to the 9th century. At various times Turkish peoples were present in even greater numbers in Qochō, and they too are known from inscriptions and manuscripts to have had followers of all three religions in Qochō. The further east Islam penetrated, the more Turks and Sogdians of other convictions came to Qochō.

After the Chinese conquest of A.D. 640, Chinese influence became very marked in the Turfān region. From about A.D. 800 the Uighurs were the dominant political force, though they had been preceded by a brief period of Tibetan control towards the end of the 8th century. Chinese and Tibetan influence can be seen clearly in the famous paintings at Bezeklik ("Place of Paintings"), to which the Tibetans had introduced Tantric art. The only extant Tantric texts in Sogdian were found at Tun-huang, which came under Tibetan control at about the same date. They concern Avalokiteśvara, whose Tantric representation is found among the paintings at Tun-huang.

It was, however, among another Iranian people that Buddhism found its most enthusiastic reception. This was among the Sakas of Khotan, the chief kingdom of southern Chinese Turkestan during much of its history.[1] We do not certainly know when Buddhism first became established in Khotan. A late tradition would, as we have seen, indicate about 84 B.C., which is not impossible. There was a Buddhist community in Khotan by the 2nd century A.D. according to Chinese sources, and as early as the middle of the 3rd century we hear of a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim going to Khotan. It was a major centre of Mahāyāna studies when Fa-hsien visited it about A.D. 400 on his way to India, and it had expanded still further when Hsüan-tsang spent some months there in the 7th century on his way back from India to China. Both pilgrims noticed the very large number of monasteries in Khotan. So too did the Korean Huei-ch'ao in the 8th century. That Buddhism flourished there in the 9th and 10th centuries we know from Khotanese sources. It may have persisted after the Muslim invasion at the beginning of the 11th century, although the capital at Yotqan, near the modern city of Ho-tien, was abandoned at that time. Since it was built

[1] See also chap 34.

largely of wood, as both literary and archaeological sources indicate, comparatively few remains have been found.

The influence of Khotan was certainly considerable. The Tibetan *Li yul luṅ-bstan-pa* tells how the king of Khotan converted the king of Kāshghar to Buddhism about A.D. 100. Certainly Kāshghar was early converted to Buddhism, but the Hīnayāna was mainly followed there, which suggests that its subsequent links were rather with the cities of the north. Such was the case also with Tumshuq, whose Buddhist monastery is thought to date from the 4th or 5th century A.D. We know nothing of its history, but the style of its artistic remains shows strong links with Qïzïl in the Kuchā region. That it was inhabited by Saka monks is shown by the find of a manuscript containing the ceremonial formulas for the ordination of monks. It is written in a dialect closely related to Khotanese. The archaeological evidence that the monastery complex was destroyed by fire about the 10th century suggests that it suffered at the hands of the Qarakhānids, who imposed Islam on the area at that time.

We know of Khotanese missionaries such as Devaprajña, Śikṣānanda and Śīladharma, who translated Buddhist texts into Chinese at Lo-yang and Ch'ang-an. On the other hand, Chu ch'ü ching sheng, marquis of An-yang, came to Khotan in the 5th century to learn Sanskrit and study Dhyāna (meditation). He returned to Nanking to translate Buddhist texts into Chinese. A Chinese catalogue finished in A.D. 515 tells how eight Chinese monks came to Khotan and there heard the stories which they later made into the well-known collection "The Sūtra of the Wise Man and the Fool". The famous monk Jinagupta, who taught the Turks about Buddhist doctrines in the 6th century, had studied in Khotan for many years.

Although it was as a centre of Mahāyānist activity that Khotan was famous, other sects and other religions had followers there. The Tibetan *Li yul luṅ-bstan-pa* mentions the arrival in Khotan at an early date of the Mahāsāṅghikas and Sarvāstivādins. At the time of I-tsing (A.D. 635–713) there were followers in Khotan of the Dharmagupta, Mahīśāsaka and Kāśyapīya subdivisions of the Mūlasarvāstivāda. Of other religions in Khotan we have scanty attestation concerning Zoroastrians under the T'ang dynasty, Manichaeans (A.D. 961), and Nestorians and Melchites after the Muslim conquest. But at any rate until the 11th century the vast majority of the population must have been Buddhist.

It was not just the Indian colony in Khotan that was Buddhist but

the dominating Iranian element as well. No doubt the presence of Indians in Khotan from its beginning helps to explain the large place Prākrit and Sanskrit occupied in Khotan. Khotanese is full of Indian loan-words, and there was evidently a certain reluctance to use Khotanese for religious purposes. One poet, who tried to instruct the people in their own language, complained as follows: "The Khotanese do not value the [Buddhist] Law at all in Khotanese. They understand it badly in Indian. In Khotanese it does not seem to them to be the Law. For the Chinese the Law is in Chinese."[1] Evidently Sanskrit was regarded as to some extent the sacred language of Buddhism. Certainly Sanskrit manuscripts have been found in the Khotan region, and many of them betray the influence of Iranian speech. But most of the surviving Buddhist literature is written in Khotanese. A few Buddhist paintings from the region of Khotan also bear inscriptions in the local language.

It is not now possible to assess the part played by Khotan in the development of the Mahāyāna, but its part is likely to have been of considerable importance. The Khotanese did not confine themselves to translating Indian Buddhist texts into their native tongue, although an impressive array of Mahāyānist texts in Khotanese translation survives in part or in full. These include such early Mahāyānist texts as the *Śūrangamasamādhisūtra* and the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*. But there were also original works not translated from the Sanskrit. Of these the best known and the most popular was the book which the official Zambasta ordered to be written. It was a compendium of Buddhism in verse form. In the second half of the 10th century original Tantric texts were being composed in Khotanese.

It is likely that original works were composed in Khotan only at a comparatively late date, from about the 8th century on. To judge by the complaint cited above concerning the reception accorded to religious works written in Khotanese, earlier original works would have been written in Sanskrit. Khotanese probably became more acceptable by the 10th century, from which period most of the surviving literature comes, because by that time Buddhism was flourishing more in Khotan than in India.

[1] See *The Book of Zambasta*, ed. and tr. R. E. Emmerick (Oxford, 1968), p. 343.

CHAPTER 27 (*a*)

MANICHAEISM AND ITS IRANIAN BACKGROUND

I. MĀNĪ'S LIFE

Mānī, the founder of Manichaeism, was born in A.D. 216 in the village of Mardinu in the Babylonian district of Nahr Kūthā.[1] His parents, however, were both of Iranian nationality. His father Pātik was an Arsacid prince,[2] his mother belonged to the Kamsarakan family, a branch of the Arsacid dynasty.[3] His mother's name is given in various ways in the sources, but may possibly have been Maryam[4] which would indicate that she was either of Jewish, or more probably, Christian confession. Pātik, who had been living in Hamadān, the capital of Media, had left this city and moved to Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the capital of the Parthian empire where many Iranian nobles possessed houses and palaces. Because of a revelation which he received in what is called a "House of idols", ordering him to abstain from eating meat, drinking wine, and having commerce with women, Pātik left the capital and attached himself to a sect in Mesene whose members were called "practitioners of ablutions" (*al-mughtasila*).[5]

It is difficult to identify the sect to which Pātik belonged. The Syriac writer Theodor bar Kōnai designates its members as "those who purify themselves" or as "(wearing) white garments". The Manichaean writings in Coptic tell us that Mani says that "the chaste", who are the same as "the baptizers",[6] venerate the First Life and the Second Life. The text then breaks off, but there is a remarkable coincidence here with

[1] Bīrūnī, text, p. 208, ll. 7ff; trans., p. 190.

[2] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, pp. 327–8.

[3] For the name Pātik see K. Rudolph, "Die Bedeutung des Kölner Mani-Codex für die Manichäismusforschung", in P. Levy and E. Wolff (eds.), *Mélanges d'histoire des religions offerts à Henri-Charles Puech* (Paris, 1974), p. 474, n. 2. For the name Kamsarakan see F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (Marburg, 1895), p. 154. For the descent of Mani's mother from the Kamsarakan family, cf. W. B. Henning, *BSOAS* XI (1943), p. 52 n. 4.

[4] Various names are given in *Fihrist*, p. 327, ll. 30ff; trans., p. 773. According to the MS C the name was Maryam.

[5] *Fihrist*, p. 328, l. 5; trans., p. 774. [Cf. H. W. Bailey's note on p. 907, from which it appears that in Mid. Pers. they were called Maktak (*mktky* in Kartīr's inscription on the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht).]

[6] *Kephalaia*, p. 44, l. 27 calls them *katharioi*, a name reminiscent of the mediaeval sect of the Kathars.

the oldest layer of Mandaean literature, where we find, as designations of the three highest principles, the First Life, the Second Life, and the Third Life. Therefore it has often been assumed that the baptist sect in question was the Mandaean sect, which had its centre precisely in Mesene. Although sexual ascetism was not a characteristic trait of Mandaeism, we find in their writings many exhortations against gluttony, drunkenness, and lust. Thus we find many points of similarity between Mandaean ethics and the ascetic life practised by Pātik. The religion of the Mandaeans is heterogenous in its traditions and it is quite possible that it had its origin among these gnostic baptists, a group with marked ascetic tendencies.

A recent discovery of a Greek papyrus, however, would seem to speak against the hypothesis that Mani was brought up in Mandaean surroundings, for it gives evidence that Mani belonged to the sect of the Elkesaites; this gnostic movement is rather fragmentarily known and its founder is an enigmatic figure.[1] Some characteristics, however, stand out clearly, betraying the Jewish–Christian origin of the Elkesaites: circumcision and celebration of the sabbath, as well as condemnation of the apostle Paul. These traits run counter to the essential doctrines of Manichaeism. Other traits, however, show agreement with the teachings of Mani, e.g. the practise of vegetarianism, the contention that Christian scriptures contain false pericopes and the criticism levelled against the Mosaic law.[2] Probably the truth is that there was merged into Mandaeism a group of baptists with at least partly Elkesaite doctrines. This is demonstrated by a passage in the Mandaean liturgies,[3] where the seven witnesses required at baptism are in exact agreement with the number in Elkesaism.[4]

The Greek papyrus is a composite text, partly a collection of Mani's autobiographical sayings, transmitted by some pupils, partly a series of biographical notices narrated in the third person, and partly secondary enlargements concerned with the bringers of revelation before Mani. The chronological arrangement is obviously the work of the compiler or editor. Full of legendary traits, the biography is seemingly written

[1] Cf. G. Strecker, s.v. "Elkesai" in *RAC* IV, cols 1171ff.

[2] Cf. also H. J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums* (Tübingen, 1949), p. 330, where a better survey is given than in *RAC*.

[3] Cf. Lidzbarski, *Mandäische Liturgien*, XXI, pp. 31–4; Drower, *The Canonical Prayer Book of the Mandaeans*, pp. 16–18.

[4] Observed by R. Reitzenstein, *Die Vorgeschichte der christlichen Taufe* (Leipzig–Berlin, 1929), p. 10, with reference to Hippolytus IX.15.5.

more with the intention of emphasizing certain aspects of Manichaeism than relating the events in Mani's life. The manner of exposition is much more abstract than in the fragments of the prophet's autobiography found elsewhere, e.g. in the *Fihrist*, in the Coptic Homilies or in the Turfan texts. From these scattered fragments we are able to reconstruct at least some periods of Mani's life.

From his fourth year Mani was brought up in a gnostic baptismal environment. At the age of 12 years, in the year A.D. 228, he received a revelation from a celestial being, the "Twin", his higher ego. The message was: "Leave this congregation! Thou dost not belong to its community. The keeping aloof from impurity, the abandonment of passions are thy task. Yet, because of thy youth the time is not come to appear in public."[1] On this occasion a full revelation of the hidden mystery was imparted to Mani.[2] The Greek papyrus does not say that Mani obeyed the command to leave the baptismal community to which he belonged; on the contrary it tells us that he still adhered to the Elkesaites and tried to carry through a reform which provoked his exclusion from this congregation. This is confirmed by Theodor bar Kōnai,[3] but we do not know when this event took place. When Mani was 24 years old he was visited anew by the heavenly being, who greeted him thus: "Peace upon thee, Mani, from me and from the Lord who sent me to thee, and elected thee to His Apostolate."[4]

Mani's message to mankind particularly emphasised truth, which he had been commanded to spread. Truth (Arabic *al-ḥaqq*, Greek *alētheia*, Syriac *qushtā*, Mandaean *kushtā*) was for the Mandaeans the very essence of religion.[5] Behind the Mandaean conception of Truth we can trace the Iranian doctrine of Asha, the Amesha Spenta who personifies Truth.[6] The expression "the paths of Truth", first seen in the Gathas,[7] occurs in Mandaean texts (*dirkia d̲kushta*)[8] and in Manichaean literature.[9] In the Manichaean religion the notion of "Truth" as a designation of Mani's message plays a central rôle.[10]

Between the revelation in A.D. 228 and that in 240 Mani, according to the Greek papyrus, received a series of visions and auditions, through

[1] *Fihrist*, p. 328, ll. 12ff.
[2] *Kephalaia*, p. 14, ll. 31ff.
[3] Pognon, p. 125, ll. 15ff.
[4] *Fihrist*, p. 328, l. 16; trans., p. 775.
[5] A synonymous term in both Syriac and Mandaic is *shᵉrārā*.
[6] Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 47.
[7] Yasna 33.5; Nyberg, *Religionen*, p. 132.
[8] *Mandäische Liturgien*, pp. 77, 128, 136.
[9] Polotsky, *Manichäische Homilien*, pp. 5.5; 47. 15, 20ff.
[10] Widengren, *The Great Vohu Manah*, pp. 69ff.

which were communicated to him the doctrines that he was ordered to preach. The account given in *Kephalaia* (p. 15), according to which he received all the content of his teaching at his call in 240, may be styled "telescoped history", for it is highly improbable that all his system was clear to him at once – without any development at all of his thinking. Because of the command given by his "Twin" Mani proclaimed his message to his father and other members of his family.[1] This notice is important because it demonstrates that Pātik had retained contact with his relatives. Thus it was possible, it would seem, for Mani to find influential supporters in the upper circles of Iranian society.

In the fragments of Mani's autobiography we read: "At the close of King Ardashīr's years I set out to preach. I sailed to the land of the Indians. I preached to them the hope of life and I selected there a good selection."[2] Probably Mani's voyage did not take him further than the Sasanian provinces of Makrān and Tūrān in southeastern Iran, and parts of northwestern India, at that time belonging to the Kushān kingdom and having the Sasanian King of Kings as its suzerain.[3] In these regions Parthian culture and political influence had been strong since 130 B.C. It is possible that Mani's voyage was inspired by the example set by the Apostle Thomas according to the "Acts of Thomas". It was, however, not Christianity but Buddhism that dominated religious life in the Kushān kingdom. Here Mani must have received impressions of Buddhist doctrines, organization, and propaganda.

Mani returned to the western provinces after about a year, in 241–2, when Ardashīr died and his son Shāpūr succeeded him.[4] He sailed to the province of Pārs and then went to Mesene. It was probably on this occasion that Mani had his strange meeting with Mihrshāh, a brother of Shāpūr and governor of Mesene. Mani succeeded in effecting the conversion of this prince, according to the prophet's legendary biography, thanks to his miraculous power.[5] In the following period Mani developed a remarkable missionary activity in the provinces of Asōristān, Māh, and Parthav, starting on the day of Shāpūr's coronation.[6] Tradition tells us that at his first public appearance Mani was accompanied by his father and two disciples, Simeon and Zakkō. The *Fihrist* states that

[1] Text M 49, II V in Andreas-Henning, "Mitteliranische Manichaica II", p. 308.
[2] *Kephalaia*, p. 15, ll. 24–27.
[3] Cf. G. Widengren, "The Establishment of the Sasanian Dynasty in the light of new evidence", in *La Persia nel Medioevo* (Rome, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1971), pp. 746ff.
[4] *Kephalaia*, p. 15, ll. 27–31.
[5] Text M 47, in Müller, "Handschriften-Reste II", pp. 82ff.
[6] *Fihrist*, p. 328, ll. 17ff; trans., p. 775.

Mani obtained his first audience with Shāpūr after 40 years of missionary activity, which is obviously wrong; probably the figure 40 is a corruption of 4.[1] The audience was secured for Mani by the king's brother Pērōz, whom he had converted.[2] *Kephalaia* lxxvi tells us that at his second audience Mani exposed his doctrine to the Great King. It was probably on this occasion that he presented the ruler with his book *Shāpūrakān*, written in Middle Persian and, as the name indicates, dedicated to Shāpūr. At Mani's request Shāpūr granted that his doctrines, which had met resistance on the part of the Iranian authorities, should be freely preached in the lands of the empire. Moreover, the ruler honoured Mani and made him a member of his *comitatus*, his personal following. As a royal retainer Mani accompanied Shāpūr in his wars against the Romans – "he fought at his side", says Alexander of Lykopolis,[3] – of course not in a literal sense. And Mani himself states that he spent several years with Shāpūr among his retinue.[4] In the following years Mani visited again the provinces of Pārs and Parthav and the borderlands of the Roman empire, but it is significant that he did not extend his personal missionary activity outside Iran;[5] his propaganda as far as he himself was concerned was concentrated on the Sasanian empire. At this time there was no state religion in Iran, for the Zoroastrian religion had not yet acquired that status.[6] But the process leading up to that result had already started and its chief instigator, the fire-priest Kartēr, was also in the company of Shāpūr on his expeditions in the West, establishing wherever possible new fire-temples in old Iranian provinces, now temporarily reconquered.[7] There can be no doubt that Kartēr and Mani both cherished the ambition of creating a state church in the Sasanian empire.

After a certain time Mani decided to propagate his doctrines outside the Sasanian empire, as a world religion. From Vēh-Ardashīr he planned missionary ventures in the West and entrusted the organization to Addai, one of his chief pupils.[8] Within the Iranian empire, still his chief concern, he directed his propaganda to the eastern provinces, using

[1] Cf. Honigmann and Maricq, *Recherches*, pp. 25ff. The position taken in Widengren, *Mani*, p. 30 now seems improbable for chronological reasons.

[2] *Fihrist*, p. 328, ll. 26ff; trans., p. 776.

[3] *Contra Manichaeos*, 4. 20; *Kephalaia* p. 15, ll. 31ff; p. 183, ll. 13ff.

[4] *Manichäische Homilien*, p. 48, ll. 2ff.

[5] *Kephalaia*, p. 16, ll. 1ff.

[6] Cf. S. Wikander, *Feuerpriester in Kleinasien und Iran* (Lund, 1946), pp. 23ff and Widengren, *Religionen*, pp. 243–5, 274 and *Mani*, pp. 31ff.

[7] Inscription of Kartēr on Ka'ba-yi Zardusht, ll. 11–13.

[8] Text M 2 R I 9–33 in Andreas-Henning, "Mitteliranische Manichaica II", pp. 301–2.

as his base the province of Ḥulwān. Under the leadership of Mār Ammō, another of Mani's most prominent disciples, Mani sent to Abarshahr (Nīshāpūr) a delegation of missionaries which included the Parthian prince Ardavān. Mār Ammō reached the great province of Khurāsān, the homeland of the Parthians, where Parthian was the dominant language; Mār Ammō therefore had to master it and its script. Thus Mani himself initiated the transmission of his doctrines in Parthian. From then on Khurāsān became the stronghold of Manichaeism and the point of departure for far-reaching missionary enterprises in Central Asia. Addai led a third undertaking in the years 261–2, directed towards Karkā dᵊBēt Selōk in the province of Bēt Garmai, east of the Tigris. The Syriac acts of the Persian martyrs testify to the success of this mission for they heap abuses on the activities of Addai and his assistant Abddakyā.[1]

Mani's own activity is described in a hate-filled and distorted form in the Christian *Acta Archelai*. Here he is described as dressed in a colourful costume with an ebony cane in his hand and carrying "a Babylonian book".[2] This is exactly the dress and appearance of the two Mithras magi on the wall paintings of the mithraeum at Dura-Europos. Because of his appearance the *Acta Archelai* actually call him a priest of Mithras.[3] They also record Mani's rather heated conversation with the Mithras priests;[4] their indignation is not surprising if he had usurped the position of a Mithras magus. The same source also makes it clear that Mani gained strong support in the border regions of north-western Iran, where the frontier fortress of Arabion (Arewān) is mentioned. This part of Iran was a centre of Mithra worship.[5] During this period of his life Mani evidently tried to associate himself with Mithraism; so we may call it his Mithraic period. Of the baptist-Mandaean period only traces are left in his system.

Shāpūr I died in April 273 and was succeeded by his son Hormizd I. Mani obtained from the new ruler the same permission to preach his religion that Shāpūr had granted him.[6] Hormizd, however, lived to reign for only a single year. Mani had gone to Babylonia and it was there that he received the news of the accession of Bahrām I. Mani must have felt that the new ruler was hostile to him for it is said that Mani

[1] Hoffman, *Auszüge*, p. 46. 9.
[2] *Acta Archelai*, xiv. 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, xl. 7.
[4] *Ibid.*, lxiii.
[5] See Widengren, *Religionen*, pp. 223ff, cf. p. 36; for Arewān, cf. T. Nöldeke, *ZDMG* XLIV (1890), p. 399.
[6] *Homilien*, pp. 42, ll. 15–30; 48.

intended to leave Iran and go to the Kushān kingdom, where he evidently counted on protection. But there arrived a royal decree prohibiting the visit.

In the year 276 Mani was ordered to present himself before Bahrām at the royal residence of Bēt Lapat. Mani's arrival there on a Sunday seems to have created great sensation. A fragmentary document in Parthian says that "Kardēr, the mōbad, took counsel with the 'helpers' who did service before the king and envy and wiles were in their hearts."[1] Kartēr, the leader of the Zoroastrian fire-priests, was Mani's great enemy; he had allied himself with the influential nobles who were the king's most intimate courtiers. The Coptic texts describe the action taken by Mani's enemies at the court. They composed a bill of impeachment and submitted it to the king. Before reaching him, however, it had to pass various channels. First the magi brought their complaint to Kartēr, who in turn told the *synkáthedros*.[2] Then these two persons went and informed the *magistor*.[3] Lastly the *magistor* told the king. When the king had heard the accusation he summoned Mani before him[4] and addressed him with the ominous words: "You are not welcome!" Mani asked: "Why? Have I done anything evil?" The king in an outburst of rage directed a series of reproaches against Mani for the ethics followed by him and his disciples; the Manichaean aversion to chase and war was especially displeasing to the king. Mani tried to defend himself, pointing to the services he had rendered as a physician and exorcist.[5] On this fateful occasion Mani was not alone but was accompanied by three followers, Nūhzādag the interpreter, Kushtāiā the scribe, and Abzākyā the Persian. The last two men are well known as trusted disciples of Mani. We do not know whether Nūhzādag was present in his capacity as interpreter or as a friend and disciple. If the first alternative is correct it should be remembered that Mani, being of Parthian origin, was able to speak the Parthian dialect, but not Middle Persian, the language of the Sasanian state and its rulers.[6] The animated scene ended with Bahrām's order to arrest and fetter Mani. He was kept in prison from 19 January to 14 February. He was, however, allowed to

[1] Text T II D 163; see W. B. Henning, "Mani's Last Journey", *BSOAS* x (1942), pp. 948 ff.

[2] The exact meaning of this term is not known, cf. Klima, *Manis Zeit*, p. 371.

[3] The exact meaning of this term is not known, cf. Klima *ibid.*

[4] *Homilien*, p. 45, ll. 14–19.

[5] M. 3. Henning, *op. cit.*

[6] The text M 47 seems to take it for granted that Mani was able to speak with the Sasanian prince Mihrshāh without an interpreter.

receive his disciples and give them his instructions. Mār Ammō transmitted these to the community. On the fourth day of the month Shahrēvar his strength was exhausted and he passed away.[1]

II. MANI'S SYSTEM

Mani's doctrines were presented in a collection of his own writings, constituting a canon. Only fragments are preserved but from them and from secondary sources his system can be reconstructed without difficulty. The book (I) *Shāpūrakān*, probably the oldest of Mani's writings, is the only book written by him in an Iranian language. All his other books were written in Syriac, at that time the dominating literary language of Mesopotamia. Mani developed a special kind of Syriac script, similar to both the Edessene and the Mandaean manner of writing. The books in Syriac are (II) "The Living Gospel", (III) "The Treasure of Life", (IV) "Pragmateia" (of which hardly anything is known), (V) "The Book of Mysteries", (VI) "The Book of the Giants", and (VII) "The Letters". Of the Manichaean non-canonical writings of a doctrinal nature the *Kephalaia* are the most important, claiming to be a record of Mani's teaching, often in conversation with his disciples.

The main structure of Mani's system is the same in all sources and only small traces of development of his thought are discernible. It is, for example, easy to discover traces of his baptist-gnostic period and his association with Mandaean circles, above all in nomenclature. But it is even easier to find a marked trend towards a rather superficial christianization, aiming at presenting the Manichaean doctrines as an esoteric interpretation of Christianity. In reality, however, Mani's system always remained a gnostic-theosophic structure, not only independent of Christianity, but actually diametrically opposed to it in its attitude to God, world, and man.

The system is expressed both in a mythical and in an abstract-philosophical form, the latter, however, never being able to liberate itself completely from its mythical presuppositions. The expositions of Manichaeism, because of its two aspects, fall into two groups: one presenting the system in a concrete form and with the help of mythical plasticity, the other giving a more intellectual form to its doctrines, trying to throw off the mythical garb, but never being entirely successful. As typical representatives of the first group may be mentioned

[1] *Homilien*, pp. 46–67. For a complete list of references to literature concerning Mani's last days, see Puech, *Manichéisme*, p. 141, n. 225.

Theodor bar Kōnai, the author of *Acta Archelai*, and Ibn al-Nadīm, while the second group is represented by Alexander of Lykopolis and, in a less extreme form, by Titus of Bostra and Augustine.

The essential problem that Mani tried to solve was the existence of Evil and the situation of Man as dependent on the existence of Evil. In accordance with his Iranian and gnostic background he took a strict dualistic view of the universe, a dualism which, although appearing to be radical, on closer examination reveals some traces of a monistic conception. One of the two fundamental dogmatic ideas of Manichaeism is that of "the Two Principles" (Middle Iranian *dō bun*), God and Matter (called *hyle*, a Greek loan-word in Syriac). They are uncreated and exist from eternity, being classified as "natures", "substances" or "roots"; the third designation has a mythical colour associated with the Middle Iranian word *bun*, which means not only "root", but also "foundation" and "principle", and is used so in cosmological Zoroastrian texts. The two principles, though both uncreated and defined as diametrically opposed one to another, as Good and Evil, Truth and Lie, Light and Darkness, nevertheless do not exist at the same level, for only the good principle is called "God", whereas the evil principle is classified a "Demon".[1] In Middle Iranian this terminology reflects the opposition between *bag* (Parthian) or *bai* (Persian) or *yazd*, and *dēv*. This distinction means that the Good is superior to the Evil, as is the case in Zurvanism.[2] The same relation between Good and Evil is indicated by Alexander of Lykopolis (v. 1), who says that God is possessed of more good than Hyle of evil.

Mani's system had as its starting point the Iranian mythical idea of a constant fight between two opposing principles: Ōhrmazd (Ahurā Mazdā) and Ahriman (Ahra Mainyu). They were primeval twins and of them Ōhrmazd had chosen Good, but Ahriman Evil.[3] In the Manichaean texts in Middle Iranian languages, however, the highest god, the Principle of Good, is not called Ōhrmazd, but Zurvān. This fact brings us back to Zurvanism and its myth about the twins Ōhrmazd and Ahriman, the sons of Zurvān.[4] It is to be noted that Ōhrmazd was the overlord (*pātixšāy*), whereas Ahriman only occupied a position of lord (*šhāh*). Zurvanism accordingly tends to modify

[1] Cf. e.g. Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, xx. 1.

[2] Cf. *Bundahišn*, chapter 1, and "The Selections of Zātspram", chapter 1.

[3] Yasna 30.

[4] For the myth about Zurvān, Ōhrmazd and Ahriman cf. Nyberg, *Religionen*, pp. 381ff, 392ff, and Widengren, *Religionen*, pp. 215ff, 283ff. [See also pp. 898ff, 938.]

dualism in a monistic direction, above all by posing Zurvān as a Principle elevated above the two hostile sons, but also by making Ōhrmazd superior to his twin-brother Ahriman, over whom he triumphs in the end. In what follows we shall find the same conditions prevailing in Manichaeism. While Mani takes Zurvanism as the basis of his system at the same time he appears as a reformer of it. Zurvanism had its centre in Media, where Mani had his most faithful supporters, and the *Acta Archelai*, as we have seen, give an account of how Mani was in conflict with the Median Magi, the adherents of Zurvanism. In his attempt at reforming their religion Mani rejected the doctrine that the good and evil gods are (twin) brothers.[1]

In Mani's system the substance of the highest god is light, which is both his own essence and the sphere of his kingdom. He was therefore also called "the Father of Light". This designation does not mean, however, that he had generated light, or created it. The kingdom of light and the sons of light mentioned in the sources are coexistent with "the Father of Light".[2] Here again we find a pantheistic trait just as in Zurvanism, where Zurvān brought forth the universe from his own body, being both Father and Mother.[3] The "earth of light", surrounded by an "ether of light", is composed of God's five "dwellings", which are of an intellectual quality: mind (sense), reason, thought, deliberation, and intuition. Burkitt (p. 33) gives the Syriac expressions with some different translations: the word *haunā* should be rendered "mind" instead of "sense", because it is the equivalent of Nous; the word *madde'ā*, "reason", could also be rendered "knowledge", gnosis, because of Mandaean parallels; and the term *maḥshabṯā* is best rendered "deliberation" rather than "imagination". The term "dwelling" is found also in Jewish and Mandaean texts. The term "Father of Greatness" points in the same direction, for both in Qumran and Mandaean writings we come across the expression "the Lord of Greatness". God's person has three aspects: his light, his force, and his wisdom;[4] with God himself these three attributes constitute the four "greatnesses". The tetrad God corresponds exactly with the Zurvanite idea

[1] Cf. *Xᵘāstvānīft* I C 3–4; text M 28 in Müller, "Handschriften-Reste II", p. 94.

[2] When the Manichaean Felix says (Augustine, *Contra Felicem*, I. 17) *pater qui generavit lucis folios*, this cannot be understood in a literal sense, cf. Baur, *Manichäische Religionssystem*, pp. 41 ff.

[3] Cf. Widengren, *op. cit.*, pp. 288ff and Nyberg, "Cosmogonie et cosmologie", pt. 1, pp. 220–1 (text and trans. from *Bundahišn*, chapter 1); Ōhrmazd has acquired the position of *mātarih* and *pitarih*, being bi-sexual like his father Zurvan as the Christians say in their polemics.

[4] *Fihrist*, p. 333, ll. 4–12; trans., p. 789.

of the four-fold deity, a totality of his three aspects of light, force, and wisdom with his own ego.[1] The dwellings of God could also be conceived of as being his "limbs", thus testifying to the pantheistic background of the Manichaean idea of God. The intelligible body in Iranian religion corresponds with the Amesha Spentas, who exist both as divine attributes and as entities outside God. The same correspondence is found in the evolution of the universe. For light as the realm of God's kingdom we should compare the Iranian idea that God's throne is the "endless light", *asar rōšnīh*.[2]

God is rather a principle than a person and this conception is in conformity with the Zurvanite idea of the highest deity, which is more abstract than concrete. The kingdom of light is without limits in three directions: the North, the East, and the West, but in the South it borders on the kingdom of "the Prince of Darkness", in Middle Iranian texts called Ahrmēn, the personal representative of Hyle. His kingdom is divided into five regions, also called "caves". In the upper cave lives the Evil Prince himself together with the bipeds, and other species of animals occupy successive levels, with reptiles in the lowest region. In his disgusting appearance the Prince of Darkness represents a combination of all the various animals. The description of him in the *Fihrist*[3] agrees with the image of the Evil Power in Mandaean literature and is obviously a Mandaean heritage in Manichaeism. In view of the many loans from Mandaean terminology and symbols the opposite view (represented by Puech) is impossible to accept.

In the Kingdom of Darkness, in contrast to the peaceful harmony reigning in the Kingdom of Light, there was constant agitation, the evil inhabitants chasing one another in a frenzy, up and down, hither and thither. In the midst of this turbulence the Prince of Darkness once rose to the height of his kingdom and saw the rays of light coming from above. From below he and his followers looked into the realms of light and created confusion and terror among the five dwellings of light. The Iranian origin of this idea of an attack on the part of the Evil Power is found, as was noted long ago,[4] in Zurvanism, and attested in *Bundahišn*, chapter 1 and "Selections of Zātspram", chapter 1, both of

[1] Cf. Schaeder, *Urform und Fortbildungen*, pp. 133–46; Nyberg, "Cosmogonie et cosmologie", pt. 2, pp. 47ff; Widengren, *Mani*, pp. 46ff (on p. 47 read *vehih* instead of *vahih*!).

[2] Cf. the beginning of *Bundahišn*, cap. 1, where originally it presumably was *Zamān i akanārak* ("the infinite Time") who dwelt in the highest light.

[3] P. 329, ll. 11ff; trans. p. 778; *Kephalaia* p. 30 l. 34–p. 31, l. 2; p. 77, l. 26–p. 78, l. 3.

[4] Cf. Baur, pp. 416ff; Widengren, *Mani*, p. 48.

which are Pahlavi texts based on lost Avestan originals.[1] The difference lies in the fact that the opponent of the Evil Spirit is not the highest God, Zurvān, but his son Ōhrmazd. We shall soon see that this deviation from the Zurvanite system is more apparent than real. The Father of Greatness took measures to meet the attack and as his five dwellings were unfit for fight he decided to go himself and conduct the war.[2] This point is important because it demonstrates the intimate relation between Manichaeism and Zurvanism. The Father of Greatness "called" (Syriac *qᵉrā*, the same term as *qrā*, used in Mandaean literature) the Mother of Life, corresponding to the female deity found in Zurvanism as the paredros of Zurvān. The Mother of Life presupposes both a Father of Life and "Life" as their son, but we observe that Mani uses other terms instead. The term "Life" is characteristic of Mandaeism, but is also a key-word in Iranian religion, met with even in the Gathas.[3]

The Mother of Life "called" Primordial Man, who thus became the Son of the Mother of Life – and ultimately of the Father of Greatness. In a Manichaean poem he is greeted as the son of the Mother.[4] In fact he is the First Life – to use a well-known Mandaean term. Primordial Man proceeded into battle, clad in his armour, his five light elements: air, wind, light, water, and fire. They constituted his proper ego and could therefore symbolically be called his five "sons". We see that Primordial Man stands for the universe, his ego represented by the five elements of the world, the Amesha Spentas (M. Pers. *amahraspandān*), an old Iranian conception. The battle was lost; Primordial Man was defeated by the Prince of Darkness and his host and robbed of his armour; according to another symbolic expression, his five sons were devoured by the demons. This defeat was nevertheless the prelude to final victory, for it was intentional. The light elements became a deadly poison for matter. Darkness had introduced into itself a substance that was insupportable, being of an essentially different nature. This event is a turning point in the evolution of the universe, for now for the first time Light and Darkness are intermingled. This mixed state, as we shall see, must return to an unmixed existence; Light and Darkness must be separated. The key-

[1] Cf. Widengren, "Zervanitische Texte". [For a comparative table of the ideas of Manichaeism and Zurvanite-Zoroastrian religion see Ch. 22 pp. 859f.]

[2] Theodor bar Kōnai, in Pognon, p. 127, ll. 16ff.

[3] Yasna 28.11, 33.1, 43.5, 48.6 (only these passages are sure; correct Widengren, ***Mani***, p. 49) speak of "the First Life", a well-known Mandaean term, the significance of which is uncertain.

[4] Text M 33 R II 68–83, 88–98 in Andreas-Henning, "Mitteliranische Manichaica III", p. 877; cf. Widengren, "Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule", col. 546.

words, *gumēxtan*, to mingle, and *vičārdan*, to separate, occur in Zurvanite texts with the same meanings, associated both in Manichaeism and Zurvanism with "the world" (*gētīg*). This idea is central to both Manichaeism and Zurvanism.

It is difficult to find an exact Iranian counterpart of Manichaean Primordial Man, but corresponding descriptions of the defeat and suffering of Primordial Man are not lacking. First of all it should be stated that in Middle Iranian texts Primordial Man is designated as Ōhrmazd.[1] This fact directs our attention to Vendidād 22, a product of the Zurvanite Magi in Media. Here we find that Ahura Mazdā is said to have been bewitched by Ahra Mainyu (Ahriman), who sent myriads of sicknesses against him. Ahura Mazdā is saved by the messenger Narisah (Nēryosang), who is sent to Airyaman, and he effects the healing of Ahura Mazdā. A fragment of a similar mythic tale is found in both the *Bundahišn* and "The Selections of Zātspram". Here, however, not Ōhrmazd but Gayōmart, the Primordial Man, is attacked by Ahriman, who sends all the diseases against him, killing him. This is done after a battle fought by Gayōmart against the Powers of Evil.[2] The coincidence with Manichaean ideas is clear: in both religions Primordial Man is attacked by the Evil Power and finally defeated, in Manichaeism suffering, in Zurvanism being killed.

The blow suffered by Primordial Man was formidable. When he awoke to consciousness he was lying far down in the abyss of darkness, fettered and surrounded by dreadful beasts and demons. He sent up a prayer for help and it had an immediate effect. The Father of Greatness "called" a second creation into being: the Friend of Light, who "called" the Great Builder, who "called" the Living Spirit. Of these deities the third is the most important because he is the active helper of Primordial Man; he extended his right hand to Primordial Man, who seized it and was drawn up out of darkness into the kingdom of light.

The light elements were still in the possession of Matter and therefore had to be rescued and brought back to the world of light. This task was carried out by the Living Spirit, in Middle Iranian called Mihryazd, the god Mithra. He was the creator of the visible world for he caught the "Archons", the demons of darkness, flayed them and made the Sky from their skins, mountains of their bones, and the earth of their excrement. Then the Living Spirit proceeded to the task of liberation

[1] Andreas-Henning, "Mitteliranische Manichaica I and II", glossaries.

[2] Cf. the texts quoted, reconstructed and analysed in Widengren, "Primordial Man" and "The Death of Gayōmart".

of light elements. Those still unpolluted he used for creating sun and moon. Those particles of light which had been sullied to a minor degree he transformed into stars.

The correspondence here to Iranian mythic cosmology may be inferred from passages in Zoroastrian Pahlavi books.[1] The fact that these luminaries are created from the bodies of the Archons is due to the correspondence of macrocosmos and microcosmos, so prominent in Iranian speculation. The whole background needs, however, further elucidation.[2] Those particles which had been befouled by mixing with darkness needed for their recovery a complicated procedure: the Father of Greatness "called" into being a third series of emanations, among which the most important representative was the Third Messenger, in Iranian tradition mostly bearing the name of Narisah (Mid. Pers.) or Narisaf (Mid. Parth.). The Third Messenger was the father of the twelve Virgins of Light, who are the twelve signs of the zodiac. An ingenious machinery was set up: a cosmic wheel, resembling a water-wheel, draws up the particles of light to the moon and from there to the sun. The rescued particles of light rise in a pillar of light, "the column of glory", towards the moon which during the first half of the month is filled with particles of light and during the second half of the month is emptied, when these particles are conducted from the moon to the sun and thence to the paradise of light. Hence the waxing and waning of the moon.

Behind these conceptions, extremely naive to the scientific mind, there lie old Indo-Iranian ideas concerning purification of the human soul by the ascent to the lunar and solar spheres. The ascension of particles of light may be compared to the passage in *Kauśītaki-Upanishad* 1.2. In Iranian religion we note the successive ascent to the spheres of stars, moon and sun which is found in older Iranian eschatology. The idea of a column of light on the other hand reflects the well-known notion in late Antiquity of the Milky Way being composed of ascending souls.[3]

The Third Messenger sailed in his vessel of light, the moon, across the vault of heaven and showed himself to the fettered demons. To the male Archons he displayed the naked feminine aspect of his body in the shape of a Virgin of Light, but to the female Archons he came in his

[1] Cf. *Bundahišn* ed. Anklesaria, p. 28, l.10; uncontaminated stars were created; above these the moon was installed, and above the moon the sun, cf. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 148.

[2] Cf. *Bundahišn*, p. 189, ll. 3ff.

[3] Cf. F. Cumont, *After-Life in Roman Paganism* (New Haven, Conn., 1923), pp. 94, 104, 152ff.

solar form as a naked youth. Accordingly he is conceived of as a hermaphroditic being. It was long ago demonstrated that Mani in this case too used a Zurvanite myth in which Narsē played the central rôle in the same function as Narisah/Narisaf in Mani's system.[1] It is significant that behind both the Manichaean and Zurvanite myths we meet with the same antipathy to sexuality and procreation. This tendency actually dominates Zurvanism along with its emphasis on next-of-kin marriage. In their sexual excitement the male Archons discharged the particles of light as sperms, which fell upon earth, which in its turn brought forth plants containing a high percentage of light, a circumstance of importance for Manichaean ethics as expressed in dietary rules. The female Archons, already pregnant, bore their offspring prematurely at the sight of Narisah's beauty. Thrown to earth, these new-born monsters devoured the buds and thus assimilated the particles of light present there. Such are the implications of the "Seduction of the Archons", a myth especially provoking the anger of the Christian Fathers, engaged in polemic against the Manichaean doctrines.

Matter naturally wished to retain as much as possible of the light still remaining with her. In the person of "Concupiscence" (Middle Iranian Āz) she conceived an ingenious plan; choosing a male demon, Ashqalūn, and a female one, Namrāēl, to put it into action: Ashqalūn swallowed all the male monsters, while Namrāēl ate all the female ones. In that way all the light particles present in the Archontic abortions were concentrated in the demonic couple. Then Ashqalūn had intercourse with Namrāēl and these two begot Adam and Eve (in Middle Iranian Gēhmurd and Murdiyānag), the first two human beings. Thus mankind, as has been properly stressed,[2] originated from a disgusting mixture of cannibalism and sexual intercourse. From his demonic origin man has inherited his body and his lust, inciting him to eating and procreating. It may be noted here that in Iranian religion too, as reflected in the *Bundahišn*,[3] the eating of flesh is the great sin committed by the first human couple. This corresponds to the eschatological doctrine that at the end of time the Evil Lust, Āz, will be overcome by abstaining from eating meat, followed by total abstention from food.[4] But in Adam was also concentrated the greatest portion of the light imprisoned in matter; he

[1] See especially E. Benveniste, "Le témoignage de Théodore bar Kōnay sur le Zoroastrisme", *Le Monde Oriental* XXVI (Uppsala, 1932–3), pp. 170–215; Cumont, *Recherches*, pp. 54–68; Widengren, *Primordial Man*.

[2] Cf. Puech, "Le manichéisme", p. 80.

[3] Ed. Anklesaria, p. 103, ll. 8ff.

[4] *Bundahišn*, p. 221, ll. 1ff.

therefore had to become the first subject of effort at redemption on the part of the world of light.

The Manichaean myth of the origin of the first human couple is an adaptation of a corresponding Zurvanite myth, describing the birth of Mashyak and Mashyānak, the lust arising in them, both for food and for sexual intercourse, and the cannibalism practised by them against their own offspring. In Zurvanism, moreover, Āz is together with Ahriman a dominating figure, spoiling the good intentions of mankind. It is also remarkable that Zurvanite ethics prescribe abstention from eating flesh, as is the case in Manichaeism.

Adam, the First Man, whose situation is described as being the same as that of Primordial Man, sank into a deep sleep, surrounded by demons. Then he was approached by the Saviour, a manifestation of the Third Messenger, receiving various names: the Son of God or Ōhrmazd or "the brilliant Jesus" (Jesus the Splendour is a typical Mandaean appellation). He is a representative of the redeeming Mind, Nous (Persian Vahman, Parthian Manvahmēd, the Middle Iranian forms of the Gathic Vohu Manah, the Good Mind).

The Saviour's aim was to redeem in the First Man the Saviour's own mind or "soul", his own Nous. He raised Adam from his sleep of death, calling him to recognize his situation, how his body was derived from the powers of evil, but his mind from the world of light. He instructed Adam in the redeeming knowledge, the gnosis, the understanding of what was, what is, and what will be[1] – an Indo-Iranian formula often found in Zoroastrian texts, indicating "the three times", the period of unmixed state, the period of mixture of light and darkness, and finally the separation of the two. Here again Mani has taken over a fundamental idea in Zurvanism and Zoroastrianism.

The description of the awakening of Adam is even in detail exactly the same as in Mandaean literature.[2] One may generally observe that all the dominating ideas and most of the mythical traits of the system are Zurvanite, but several details and terms are a Mandaean heritage in Manichaeism.

The human mind, a totality concentrated in the First Man, Adam, and his descendants, according to the system is part of the totality of light, concentrated as it was in Primordial Man. Thus by redeeming mankind the Saviour redeems himself, his own light particles – the dogma

[1] Cf. the description in Theodor bar Kōnai (Pognon, p. 130, ll. 23ff).
[2] Cf. *Ginzā*, pp. 34ff; p. 112, ll. 14ff; p. 550, ll. 1ff.

of "the redeemed Redeemer".[1] We shall now consider how this process was enacted in terms of individual and general eschatology.

The Manichaean eschatology narrates the story of salvation. It should be observed at once that "salvation" is a Zurvanite, but not a Zoroastrian notion. This world is under the rulership of Ahriman, from whom man must seek salvation. The attitude to this world might be expected to be entirely negative and pessimistic in both Zurvanism and Manichaeism, but there exists a firm conviction that in the long run, man, microcosmos, and the world, macrocosmos, will be saved and the sum of light brought back to original purity.

Immediately after death the righteous Manichee meets his higher ego, Nous, incarnate in the figure of a Saviour, a figure of light;[2] this meeting with its following ascent to the world of light is further developed in some passages in Manichaean texts. It was seen long ago that this scene is a Manichaean adaptation and interpretation of the description of the fate of the soul after death, given in *Hādōxt Nask*.[3] Details in the Manichaean account moreover agree perfectly with very old Indo-Iranian descriptions of how the ascending soul is received in heaven.[4] In both Manichaean and Zoroastrian literatures we also find that the higher ego of the deceased is identical with man's own deeds; this is an essential point in all Iranian individual eschatology. Another significant detail is the simile of treasure and treasurer.[5]

The constant fight between Good and Evil, between Light and Darkness, culminates, exactly as in Iranian religion, in a final, terrible war, called in Manichaeism "the Great War". The scattered congregation will come together again, the church will be restored, the Righteousness, i.e. the sum of the righteous, will triumph, for "the Great King" will appear on earth and assume dominion. The last judgement will take place, described by Mani in New Testament language (itself ultimately influenced by Iranian imagery). The main part, however, of this apocalyptic drama is taken from Iranian apocalyptic speculations, as are the terms "Great War" (Middle Iranian *artīk i vazurg*, found in the Zurvanite apocalypse)[6] and "Great King" (found

[1] The term was coined by Reitzenstein. See Widengren, *Mani*, p. 66.

[2] *Kephalaia*, chapter 141.

[3] Cf. Reitzenstein, pp. 28ff. More material and viewpoints in Wikander, *Vayu* I, pp. 42ff and Widengren, "Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule", col. 544.

[4] This fact was stressed by Wikander, *op. cit.*

[5] See Widengren, *Mani*, p. 150 for references; and for the simile of treasure and treasurer see Widengren, *The Great Vohu Manah*, pp. 84–86.

[6] "The Selections of Zātspram", xxxiv. 52.

in the "Oracles of Hystaspes"). It calls for notice that the general description given in Manichaean homilies concerning the end of the world[1] agrees perfectly with corresponding traits in the "Oracles of Hystaspes" – a fact hitherto overlooked.[2] A very special detail is the rôle played by Concupiscence (Middle Iranian Āz). In the Zurvanite apocalypse[3] Āz, the captain of Ahriman, is with Ahriman the sole survivor of the evil powers in the last days. Correspondingly in Manichaeism Ahriman (Parth. Ahrmēn) and Āz are very often mentioned together, e.g. in text M 472. The text M 470 mentions that in the final battle Āz and the demons will be slain.

The Saviour Christ (as he is called in the Homilies), together with the tutelary gods and the righteous, will leave the earth and return to the kingdom of light. A last process of purification takes place. The remaining particles of light which it is still possible to rescue will be collected to form a statue, called *andriás* in the Coptic texts.[4] Like a cosmic pillar of light this statue will be raised to heaven. Then the terrestrial globe itself will be annihilated; the damned and the demons, the world of matter and darkness will be thrown together in the shape of a clod, *bolos*. This clod will be sunk in the depths of a moat of cosmic extent, which will be covered with a gigantic rock. In this way the two natures are "reinstated", brought back to their original state, with this difference, however, that although light and darkness will continue their separate existence, darkness will not be capable of renewing its attack upon the world of light. Would some particles of light become lost for ever? One school was of this opinion, whereas another school declared that the Father of Light was able to regain all the missing particles. Most probably Mani on this particular point did not speak with sufficient clarity.

Mani considered his religious system as a divine Wisdom. This Wisdom he and every Manichee received by "the eye of the soul", which is opened in order to behold the light of the heavenly glory. In this way man is able to see both the visible and the invisible. In the Zoroastrian encyclopaedic work *Dēnkart* this vision of the eye of the soul is described in several passages and associated with Wisdom. This interior eyesight, giving divine Wisdom, is met already in the Upanishads and should be regarded as an Indo-Iranian idea.[5]

[1] *Manichäische Homilien*, pp. 7ff.
[2] Cf. the survey in Widengren (ed.), *Manichäismus*, Einleitung, p. xix.
[3] "Selections of Zātspram", xxxiv.
[4] Several passages are listed in Puech, *Manichéisme*, p. 177, n. 353.
[5] Cf. Widengren, "La Sagesse dans le Manichéisme", pp. 507ff.

The Zurvanite Magi in Media always boasted that they possessed knowledge not only of all divine things, but also of the origin and laws of the universe.[1] Here Zurvanism takes the same attitude as Manichaeism and it is significant that the Zoroastrian encyclopaedia, the *Bundahišn*, full of Zurvanite traditions, gives a complete summary of all existing knowledge, providing a compendium of cosmology, astrology, geography, zoology, botany, anthropology and at the same time transmitting the whole religious tradition about the development and history of the world from the original unmixed state *via* the mingling of Good and Evil to the end, with the final battle between the two hostile powers and the victory of the good powers and the ultimate destruction of all evil powers, leading to the hurling down of Ahriman into the abyss. It is this same knowledge that Manichaeism aims to present; and here there arose many difficulties for the Manichees in their disputes with Christian theologians, trained in Aristotelian logic.

Mani was of the opinion that his Wisdom was both the sum and perfection of all previous religious Wisdom. In the *Kephalaia* (cliv) he says that as one water is added to another water and thus many waters are created, similarly all old writings have been added to Mani's own books, so that a great Wisdom has been created. Mani's religion is accordingly a typical book-religion. He sees his superiority to his predecessors, whom he accepts, precisely in the fact that he himself wrote his Wisdom in books, whereas other prophets did not write anything, but left it to their disciples to put their doctrines into writing.[2]

As his predecessors Mani acknowledged the Buddha in India, Zoroaster in Persia, Jesus in the West, while he proclaimed himself the Apostle of the God of Truth, sent in the last age to Babylonia.[3] It is possible that this fourfold scheme of apostles is inspired by an original Zurvanite conception.[4] In accordance with this doctrine of predecessors Mani felt entitled to include also the New Testament among his holy scriptures, even if he, following Marcion, undertook to "purge" these writings of what he considered later accretions and falsifications. The Old Testament on the other hand he rejected altogether, as had

[1] [For supporting and diverging views among Iranists concerning the definition, scope or development of Zurvanism, and the range of its influence, the works listed under Zurvanism in the bibliography of Ch. 23 may be consulted.]

[2] See the texts quoted in C. Schmidt-H. J. Polotsky, *Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten* (Berlin, 1933), pp. 41ff and compare with the Middle Iranian text T II D 126, in "Mitteliranische Manichaica II", pp. 4. 295ff.

[3] Bīrūnī, text, p. 207, ll. 17ff; trans., p. 190.

[4] Cf. Widengren, "La Sagesse", pp. 512ff.

done Marcion, on whom Mani is dependent in his polemics against the Old Testament and Judaism.[1]

Of his predecessors Mani, at least in his later days, considered himself closely connected with Jesus. He declares himself to be the Paraclete, once promised by Jesus; this Paraclete is identified with his higher ego, the Heavenly Twin, appearing to him and calling him to be an Apostle. Mani in his correspondence introduces himself as "Mani, Apostle of Jesus Christ". Jesus actually plays a considerable rôle in Mani's system, though he is not an essential element of it. He appears in three forms: (1) Jesus the Splendour, who comes to Adam to awaken him; the epithet "Splendour" (*ẓīwā*) is in Mesopotamian gnosticism given to divine mythical beings. Jesus the Splendour has nothing to do with the historical Jesus; in relation to the system he could equally well carry another name. (2) Jesus Patibilis, among the western Manichees the name of the Living Soul, which is mingled with the corporeal world in plants, animals and human beings. The name of Jesus in this case too is a Manichaean adaptation. (3) Jesus Christ, the historical man, who, however, has been "dehistoricized", so that his death on the cross is said to have been an illusion. His only real rôle is that of a predecessor of Mani as a bringer of revelation. In that capacity he occupies the same position as the Buddha and Zoroaster. When Mani calls himself "Apostle of Jesus Christ" this appellation designates Jesus Christ as the representative of Nous, the Great Mind, and accordingly as a Heavenly Apostle, of whom Mani is so to speak the earthly representative. He does not consider himself the Apostle of the historical Jesus. In Middle Persian texts (e g. M 17 g) Mani calls himself "the Apostle of Jesus Aryāmān"; here Aryāmān is identified with Jesus, and this Aryāmān is a Saviour figure in Zurvanism, being also like Jesus an Apostle (*frēstak*, the same word as used in M 17 g). Again it is clear that Aryāmān is a representative of Nous, the Great Mind.[2] In adopting the formula "Apostle of Jesus Christ" Mani evidently intended to make his position as an Apostle and Bringer of Revelation more acceptable to Christians.[3] All the three aspects of Manichaean christology testify to the same aim: to present Manichaeism as the esoteric, "spiritual" interpretation of Christianity.

[1] See Widengren, "Der Manichäismus", pp. 279ff.

[2] Cf. also text M 36 V 7 in "Mitteliranische Manichaica II", p. 325, where he is called "the Highest Ego"; there are more implications in the use of the name Aryāmān than indicated in the notes 5–6.

[3] Augustine, *Contra Faustum* XIII. 4; H. J. Polotsky in Widengren (ed.), *Manichäismus*, pp. 138ff has given a detailed analysis of the place occupied by Jesus in Manichaeism.

III. ORGANIZATION AND CULT

Mani's congregation was organized in a two-fold way: it comprised the elect and the hearers, or the righteous and the hearers according to Middle Iranian terminology. Two distinct ways of life were followed by these groups of believers and the demands made upon them were different. The elect had to observe three kinds of precepts or "seals" (Middle Iranian *muhr*): the seal of the mouth, implying the five senses, the seal of the hands, implying all behaviour, and the seal of the bosom, embracing every expression of sexual urge. The first *muhr* applied to both speaking and eating; the elect had to be pure in thought and word and to abstain from eating meat, which as in Zurvanism was thought to derive from the Evil Principle and to promote lust. The elect were to live on fruits, which, as we have seen, contained many light-particles. Fruit juice was preferable to water, since water was a "hylic" substance. The second *muhr* implied the prohibition of all actions that could harm plant and animal life; Manichees were forbidden to uproot any plant, to fell any tree, or to kill any animal. This feature is reminiscent of Buddhism. The third *muhr* prescribed, like Buddhism, complete sexual ascetism and meant of course renunciation of marriage. Sensual lust in itself was an evil, but procreation was far worse because it prevented the reassembling of light-particles.

While the elect devoted themselves to the redemption of their souls, the hearers had to undertake all those acts forbidden to the elect, but necessary for the maintenance of life. Thus the hearers had to furnish the elect with essential nourishment. They led a normal life, evidently eating even meat. But they had to observe one special day of fasting in the week: Sunday. The elect fasted on Monday as well. Both groups observed an entire month of fasting prior to the great Bema-festival. The rigorous ethical requirements caused many transgressions and rendered the practice of confession and penitence a regular institution. Confession formulas, the *X^{u}āstvānīft*, are preserved. Similar formulas are extant also in Zoroastrian literature and possibly they derived from the circles of Median Magi, known for enforcing penitence and punishment. In their preserved form, however, Manichaean confessions show above all the influence of Buddhism,[1] although a Zurvanite connection cannot perhaps be entirely ruled out.[2]

[1] Asmussen, *X^{u}āstvānīft*, p. 258.

[2] Widengren, *Die Religionen Irans*, p. 268. The theological background of confession has been analysed by Puech, *Sur le Manichéisme*, pp. 169–78.

The elect were divided into four categories: Middle Iranian *hamōžag*, "teacher"; *espasag* "servant, bishop"; Mid. Pers. *mahistag*, Parth. **masistag* "presbyter" or Mid. Pers. *mānsālār*, Parth. *mānsardār* "house-master"; and *ardāv* "righteous" or Mid. Pers. *vičīdag*, Parth. *vižīdag* "elect". There were twelve teachers, like the apostles of Jesus, 72 "bishops", like his 72 disciples, and 360 "presbyters" – clearly the number of days in the year, a Zurvanite influence. Mani's successor as director of the Manichaean church was called Mid. Pers. *sālār*, Parth. *sardār*.[1] The aggregate of the righteous were designated by the abstract term Mid. Pers. *ardāyīh*, Parth. *ardāvīft*, "righteousness"; while the whole church was called *dēn*, "religion". These designations are based on old Iranian conceptions.[2]

The Bema-festival was celebrated at the end of the fasting month as the principal feast of the year. The remembrance of Mani's death was its focus and the founder was invisibly present in the symbol of a throne (Middle Iranian *gāh*), a sort of judge's seat, which the word *bema* indicates. This element of the empty seat was undoubtedly taken over from Buddhism, where it symbolizes the Buddha's ascent to heaven.[3]

IV. THE SPREAD OF MANICHAEISM

In the West Manichaeism had already during Mani's lifetime reached Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. By the year 300 the Manichees were sufficiently numerous in Egypt to provoke the philosopher Alexander of Lykopolis to compose a treatise against them (see above). From Egypt Manichaeism spread to northern Africa and Spain, from Syria to Asia Minor and from there to Greece, Illyria, Italy, and Gaul. In these western provinces of the Roman empire Manichaeism met with violent persecution from the state. The emperor Diocletian promulgated in 297 his famous edict against the Manichees, in which he accused them of all kinds of crimes and beastly habits, inspired according to him by their Persian origin. Diocletian looks on Manichaeism as a wholly Persian religion (*de Persica adversaria nobis gente progressa vel orta*) and speaks of their *doctrina Persica* and mentions their *scaevas leges Persarum*. He prescribed the most severe measures against the Manichees: their tracts and the authors of them were to be burned, and their followers were to

[1] The survey in Widengren, *Mani*, p. 98 is not correct in all details and the English rendering of some terms is not altogether felicitous.

[2] Cf. Widengren, *The Great Vohu Manah*, pp. 67–70.

[3] Cf. Widengren, *Mani*, p. 104, with a reference to Foucher's convincing demonstration.

be punished with the loss of life and property. Its Iranian origin alone was sufficient to make the new religion a danger to the Roman State, involved in constant wars against the Sasanian empire. It is moreover possible that the Manichees had instigated the revolts in Egypt in the year 297, when the edict was issued.

The Christian Church, persecuted by Diocletian, but elevated soon afterwards to the position of a State Church, was in the long run a still more formidable enemy. Christianity was able to fight Manichaeism with both secular and spiritual weapons, its methods were ruthless and its polemics not always fair. It was imperative for Christianity to conquer Manichaeism, for in the West Manichaeism claimed to be the esoteric aspect of Christianity and thus was a most dangerous rival. Typical illustrations of the clash between Christianity and Manichaeism are afforded by the narratives of the public discussions held by Porphyrius of Gaza and Augustine of Hippo with Manichaean missionaries and theologians. The great Church Father, Saint Augustine, had himself been a Manichaean hearer for nine years and in his polemics he shows himself extremely well informed with regard to Manichaean doctrines and habits. Thanks to his philosophical-rhetorical training and his intellectual capacity he easily outwitted the Manichaean teachers. Augustine does not hesitate to use against his opponents gossip tales which he can hardly have presented in good faith.[1] But quite apart from such individual aspects the Manichees were in an impossible position in these public debates. They were the champions of a religion which, while lacking any real Christian content as regards dogma and cult, nevertheless claimed to be the true Christian religion. To refute this audacious contention was not difficult, especially for trained and ruthless theologians. No doubt these public discussions held in the presence of a menacing Christian mob served to eliminate the Manichaean influence among educated people and to deprive Manichaeism of intellectual leaders in the West. Severe persecutions also played their part. It is uncertain how long Manichaeism continued to have followers in the West, but the well-known Greek abjuration formula dates from the 9th century. It is probable that Manichaeism in the West was extinct before the year 1000.

We have seen that Mani concentrated his own missionary activities on the provinces of the Sasanian empire. In Sasanian times Manichaeism had already reached and crossed the river Oxus. Sogdiana provided a

[1] Cf. *De haeresibus*, 46. 2.

base for Manichaean missionary activities with good communications and connections both eastwards and westwards. The Sogdians were a people of marked mercantile interests, who extended their business activities as far as China. At various places along the famous "silk road", leading from China to the western countries, the Sogdians established commercial colonies. For the spread of Manichaeism eastwards its foothold in the Sogdian cities of Samarkand and Tashkent was of outstanding importance. The Manichees were especially numerous and influential in Samarkand.

Since the Han dynasty (206 B.C. to A.D. 220) China had interests to protect in her neighbouring western regions. But there was a period of regress after Han and only with the Tang dynasty (after A.D. 618) China regained its political and military influence in Turkestan. But now the Chinese met with resistance from the victorious Arabs, who after the downfall of the Sasanian empire in 652 were advancing beyond the Oxus, having crossed it in 667. The Chinese, who tried to restore the Sasanian dynasty, were driven back. For a considerable time the Arab dominion brought better conditions to the Manichees, for the authorities left them in peace, presumably not even noticing them. This fact together with the renewed connections between Turkestan and China made possible a revitalization of Manichaean propaganda in the East. There existed in China a Sasanian colony, followers of the pretender Pērōz, son of the last Sasanian king, Yazdgird. The intimate relations between this Chinese protégé and Iran, partly of an underground character, seem to have led the Manichees to seek connections with their compatriots in China and to gain a footing there; high Manichaean ecclesiastics appeared at the imperial court. In spite of favourable recommendations sent by the viceroy of Tokhāristān, a Chinese vassal, to the emperor it was not long before an imperial edict was issued against the Manichees (A.D. 732).[1]

After the fall of the Umayyad dynasty the situation in the caliphate for the Manichees deteriorated and ultimately grew catastrophic. During the preceding peaceful period many of those who had fled to eastern Iran returned to live in Irāq. With the establishment of the 'Abbasid caliphs much of the old Sasanian spirit was revived. It was unfortunate for the Manichees that this also meant a revival of persecution. Many people of Iranian origin, including writers and poets, were accused of being *zindīqs*. The term *zindīq* derives from Middle Parthian *zandīk*,

[1] See also Ch. 13, p. 554 on the Manichees in China.

"followers of *zand*", which means "knowledge" and refers to the fixed written tradition belonging to the Magi from Shīz, a tradition embracing many Zurvanite doctrines;[1] so it (zindiq) was certainly an appropriate designation for the followers of Mani, who, as we have seen, took Zurvanism as the basis of his gnostic teaching. The Persian authors accused of being zindīqs were most probably responsible for the translation of Mani's writings into Arabic, the new dominant language. Here the name of Ibn al-Muqaffa' calls for notice as a translator of several of Mani's works. Many passages in Arabic literature narrate the measures taken by Islamic authorities, above all by the caliphs, in order to discover and exterminate the Manichees by presenting them with a choice between abjuration and death. Thanks to Ibn al-Nadīm we are well acquainted with the success of these repressive methods as they were used by the Chief Inquisitor, *ṣāḥib al-zanādiqa*, "the master of the heretics". Whereas Ibn al-Nadīm in the period before 967 had personally known some three hundred Manichees in Baghdad, there were at the time of his writing the *Fihrist* scarcely five remaining in the capital.[2] Thus we may presume that soon after A.D. 1000 Manichaeism became extinct in Irāq.

In Central Asia, however, Manichaeism had its greatest success when in the 8th century the Turkish Uigur tribe underwent conversion, and some time after A.D. 760 the Uigur ruler proclaimed Manichaeism the state religion in his territories around the large city of Lo-Yang. The Manichees also made repeated efforts to gain a firm footing in China. They were partly successful and from the 11th to the 14th century they enjoyed high favour in certain provinces. In Central Asia and China the Manichees were more syncretistic than ever, leaning heavily on Buddhism. This provoked the same effect as elsewhere. The Buddhists of course vigorously opposed the Manichaean doctrines and especially the identification of Mani with the Buddha. Still more hostile was Confucianism which was more dangerous because of its influence with the executive authorities. After the breakdown of Uigur power in the 9th century Manichaeism was deprived of its most powerful support. Left to itself in China, here as elsewhere, it was forced to become an underground movement. The Mongol invasion was probably also calamitous. That Chinese Manichaeism lacked vitality is shown by the Chinese texts found in our days. With the end of the Middle Ages the

[1] Cf. H. H. Schaeder, *Iranische Beiträge* I (Halle, 1930), pp. 76, 274ff.
[2] *Fihrist*, p. 337, ll. 26ff; trans., p. 803.

last traces of Manichaeism in Central Asia and China disappeared. After an existence lasting from the 3rd to the 15th century the history of Manichaeism came definitely to an end.

We can only speculate on the causes of the extinction of Manichaeism. Some of its weaknesses as a world religion are apparent, above all its lack of courage to stand on its own feet and its syncretistic, not to say parasitic tendencies. But at the same time it possessed important assets, above all the dualistic interpretation of man and the world, appealing to many people, and its pessimistic view of the present, coupled with its belief in the ultimate victory of Light over Darkness. At any rate its founder Mani must be regarded as one of the great personalities in the history of religions.[1]

[1] [For Manichaean literature in Iranian languages, see Chs. 31 (pp. 1162ff), 32(*b*), 33 (pp. 1223ff).]

CHAPTER 27(*b*)

MAZDAKISM

Mazdakism was a gnostic religious movement with strong social implications which flourished during the reign of Kavād (A.D. 488–531), caused revolutionary upheavals of a socialistic nature in Iran, but was brutally suppressed at the close of Kavād's reign, mainly through the efforts and machinations of Kavād's son and successor, Khusrau I. A populist and egalitarian movement, it preached in its acute form an equitable distribution of wealth and the breaking or lowering of the barriers which made for the concentration of property and women in the hands of the privileged classes.

The rise of socialism and communism in Europe has spurred special interest in the history of the movement, and Mazdakism has received considerable attention in the past hundred years. The first major attempt at a systematic study of the sect was by T. Nöldeke,[1] who brought together the Greek, Syriac, Arabic and Persian sources, and set forth the essential facts of the history of the movement. His study has served as the basis for all subsequent elaborations; he emphasized the religious nature of the movement, and characterized Kavād as a strong-willed monarch and a capable politician, who leaned towards Mazdakism not so much as an act of faith but as an expedient in order to curb the power of the nobles and the clergy.

E. G. Browne, in his discussion of the 8th and 9th century Persian heresiarchs,[2] drew attention to the affinities between their doctrines and those of Mazdak, and O. G. von Wesendonk in 1919 elaborated on the survival of Mazdakite doctrines among a number of sects, mostly of an Isma'īlī tendency, which sprang up after Abū Muslim's murder, and drew parallels between some Mazdakite doctrines and those of the Druzes of Lebanon.[3] He considered Mazdak a native of Susiana who had roots in both Iranian and Mesopotamian cultures, and whose pacifistic teachings were an attempt to purify the existing forms of Zoroastrianism.

[1] Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. 455–67; *idem*, "Orientalischer Socialismus", *Deutsche Rundschau* XVIII (Berlin, 1879), pp. 284–91.
[2] *Literary History* I, pp. 172, 308ff.
[3] "Die Mazdakiten" and "Die Religion der Druzen".

A major contribution on the subject was published in 1925 by A. Christensen in the form of a monograph, *Le règne du roi Kawādh et le communisme mazdakite*, in which the author attempted a more thorough analysis of the sources, using also some which were not available to Nöldeke, and refined some of the latter's conclusions. He presented Mazdakism as originally an offshoot of the Manichaean religion and Kavād as a king of humanitarian impulses who was drawn to Mazdakism, not out of Machiavellian designs, but by a sincere desire for the welfare of the people.[1]

The next important contribution to the field was G. H. Sadighi's *Les mouvements religieux iraniens au IIe et au IIIe siècle de l'hégire* (Paris, 1938), which closely examined the affiliation of the Khurramīs with the Mazdakites, indirectly throwing new light on some aspects of Mazdakite religion.

In her book on Iranian medieval cities, published in 1956,[2] N. Pigulevskaja devoted a chapter to the Mazdakite movement in which she characterized it as primarily born of peasant protest and linked Khusrau's reforms and also the 549 uprising in Khūzistān under Anōshagzād with it.

In 1957 O. Klima published his *Mazdak*, a comprehensive study of the movement in the contexts of Sasanian history and Middle Eastern religions. He conceived Mazdakism as a social movement in religious garb, brought about by social and economic conditions in Sasanian Iran. He saw Mazdak as a militant social reformer, and Kavād, with Nöldeke, as an able and energetic politician who tried to turn the movement to his own advantage. Klima followed his monograph twenty years later with another work, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Mazdakismus*, in which he elaborated and amplified his earlier researches. Pointing out the fact that Mazdak's name does not actually appear in contemporary sources for some three quarters of a century, and that only oblique references to his movement occur during this period, he concludes that the omission must be the consequence of a deliberate attempt on the part of Khusrau to suppress Mazdak's name from all records, including the *Khwadāy-nāmag*, which was being composed during his reign. This *damnatio memoriae*, however, was counteracted later, according to Klima, by Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 760), who introduced

[1] Pp. 107ff.

[2] *Goroda Irana v rannem sredievekov'e*, Moscow–Leningrad; French tr. *Les villes de l'état iranien aux époques parthe et sassanide*, pp. 195–230.

an account of Mazdak in his translation into Arabic of the *Khwadāy-nāmag*. This account served as the main source for later Perso-Arab historians.[1] Klima also goes to some length to prove the possibility that in the name of Mazdak two similar but separate names, one Iranian (Mazdak, Mizdak or Muždak, etc.) and one Semitic (e.g. Mazdeq from the base *zdq*), have coalesced in an environment in western or southwestern Iran which included both Iranian and Semitic cultural elements.[2]

Few topics bearing on Sasanian Iran have been subjected to more extensive scrutiny than Mazdakism;[3] yet our knowledge of the Mazdakite religion remains sketchy because of the paucity of sources. Nothing at all survives from the Mazdakite writings, as a result of severe persecution, and, with a very few exceptions, such information as we possess derives from hostile accounts. As will be seen, however, an exploration of the sources should throw more light on Mazdakite beliefs than has hitherto been acknowledged.

THE SOURCES

The sources on Mazdakite religion may be roughly divided into contemporary and post-Sasanian. The first category consists of Syriac and Greek (Byzantine) works.[4] Showing scant interest in the religious concerns of Iran, these yield little on the teachings of Mazdak, and on such matters generally reflect the view of the Sasanian establishment; they are however invaluable for a reconstruction of the events of the reigns of Kavād and Khusrau.

The second category comprises Arabic, Persian and Middle Persian sources. The last named, written during the 9th and 10th centuries, provide us, contrary to expectation, with very little information; a general expression of venom practically sums up their contents.[5]

The Arabic and Persian histories which treat of Mazdakism are in general those which record the traditional history of Iran,[6] and they

[1] *Beiträge*, pp. 16ff, 43ff, 53ff, 70, n. 22. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 85ff, 98ff.

[3] For a listing of Soviet publications on Mazdakism see Klima, *Mazdak*, pp. 243ff and *Beiträge*, pp. 147ff.

[4] These are Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, *Chronicle*, ed. and tr. W. Wright, (Cambridge, 1882), paras ix, xx, xxi–xxiv; Procopius, *Persian Wars* I. v–xi, II. ix; Agathias, *Histories*, tr. J. D. Frendo (Berlin-New York, 1975), IV, chaps 27–30, pp. 130–4; Malalas of Antioch, *Chronographia*, in J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series Graeca XCVII (Paris, 1860), cols 465, 633, 653; Theophanes, in Migne, *op. cit.* CVIII (Paris, 1863), col. 396. For other Syriac and Greek sources see Klima, *Mazdak*, p. 20, n. 24.

[5] See Christensen, pp. 20–2, for a translation of the relevant passages.

[6] See pp. 359ff and 1280ff in this volume for a survey and evaluation of these.

derive their information mainly from the Arabic translations of the *Khwadāy-nāmag.*[1] These works are concerned chiefly with the actual events of the reigns of Kavād and Khusrau, among which figures the Mazdakite episode; of Mazdak's teachings they contain little, except for an account of his social doctrine, presented in an unfavourable light. Far more important for the study of Mazdakite doctrine are some of the Islamic heresiographers, notably Shahristānī (1076–1153),[2] whose source, Abū 'Īsā Hārūn al-Warrāq (d. 247), a knowledgeable Manichaean or Zoroastrian scholar converted to Islam, seems to have had access to some genuine Mazdakite work. Ibn al-Nadīm[3] and Firdausī, who show a rather sober attitude towards the sect, also provide some useful information in this respect.

There is yet another source on Mazdak of Middle Persian origin, the *Mazdak-nāmag.* This was a fictionalized account of the Mazdak episode, meant for entertainment but sharing the outlook of Mazdak's detractors. Translated by Ibn al-Muqaffa', the *Mazdak-nāmag* appears to have enjoyed considerable popularity, and provided material for some of the Perso-Arab works. The fictional accounts in the lengthy exposition of the *Siyāsat-nāma*[4] and a versified story published in the *Rivāyāt* of Dārāb Hormazdyār[5] must have been taken from this work. Some accounts in Bīrūnī,[6] Ibn al-Balkhī, the *Mujmal al-tawārīkh,* and Ibn al-Athīr also go back to it. Among the features taken from the *Mazdak-nāmag* we may count (a) the story that Mazdak, by having a tunnel dug to a sacred fire and by hiding one of his followers there, makes it appear to Kavād that the fire talks to him, thus impressing the king with a miracle and luring him into his heresy; (b) the story of the rescue of Kavād by his wife/sister through her ruse and her promises to the jail warden; (c) the story of Mazdak's asking Kavād for Khusrau's mother to be surrendered to him and Khusrau's intervention; (d) the dialogues

[1] Chief among these are: Ya'qūbī I, pp. 185–6; Ṭabarī I, pp. 883–96; II, p. 1588; III, p. 1165; Ibn Qutaiba, *Ma'ārif,* ed. Wüstenfeld, p. 328; Dīnawarī, pp. 67–9; Ibn Baṭrīq I, pp. 190–2, 206ff; Ibn al-Faqīh, p. 247; Ḥamza, pp. 56, 106ff; Maqdisī II, pp. 21ff; III, pp. 167ff, IV, pp. 30ff; Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh,* pp. 101, 353–4, *Murūj* II, p. 196, III, 27 (ed. Pellat, I, p. 305, II, 124); Ibn Miskawaih, ed. Caetani, I, pp. 168, 171, 177; Bīrūnī, *Āthār,* p. 209; Fück, pp. 79–80; Tha'ālibī, pp. 596–604; Firdausī, pp. 42ff, *Tārīkh-i Qumm,* pp. 86–8; Ibn al-Balkhī, pp. 23, 84–91; Bal'amī, pp. 967–79, 977–9; *Nihāyat al-irab,* pp. 226–7; *Mujmal al-tawārīkh,* pp. 73, 95, 178–9, 353–4; Ibn Isfandiyār, pp. 212, 220; Khwārazmī, pp. 37–8; Ibn al-Athīr, Beirut ed. (based on Tornberg), pp. 314ff, 434ff; Abu'l-Fidā', ed. Fleischer, p. 88; Mustaufī, *Nuzhat,* p. 61. See the bibliography to Ch. 10(*b*) for details.

[2] Pp. 109, 113–14, 132, 185, 188; cf. Naubakhtī, pp. 41–2.

[3] Pp. 342–4, Tajaddud ed., pp. 405–8; trans. p. 817.

[4] Niẓām al-Mulk, pp. 254–78.

[5] II, pp. 214–30.

[6] Fück, pp. 79–80.

between Mazdak and Kavād on withholding goods from the needy; (e) the story of the birth of Khusrau from a girl whom Kavād marries in Khūzistān or Khurāsān during his flight to the Hephthalites, Kavād's testing of Khusrau when he is grown up, and Khusrau's proving to Kavād the evils of the Mazdakite aberration in the course of a dialogue; and (f) the massacre of the Mazdakites by planting them head down in earth to make the spectacle of a human garden.[1]

THE EARLY STAGE OF MAZDAKISM

Although Mazdakism flared up under Kavād, its genesis belongs to an earlier period. Islamic sources mention a Zarādusht (Zardusht), son of Khurragān,[2] a *mōbad* or chief mōbad from Fasā in Fārs, as the originator of the doctrine.[3] This is confirmed by Pseudo-Joshua (para. xx), a contemporary Syriac source (written about 507), who says Kavād "had re-established the abominable sect of the magi which is called that of the Zardushtakān"; the date of this Zardusht is not specified. According to Malalas of Antioch (p. 465), another contemporary source, during the reign of Diocletian (245–313) a Manichaean by the name of Bundos appeared in Rome and professed new doctrines in opposition to the official Manichaeism; he then proceeded to Persia to propagate his doctrine, which the Persians call that of the Dərist-dēnān.[4] In another passage (p. 633) Malalas states that Kavād was called Dərist-dēn.[5] This sobriquet is also recorded in Islamic sources, although in corrupt forms.[6] One arrives then at the conclusion that before the time of Mazdak a heterodox sect[7] was founded with which Kavād came to be identified. The fact that the Mazdakite movement had at least two stages in Sasanian times finds confirmation also in Ibn al-Nadīm, who mentions a Mazdak the Older (*al-qadīm*) and a Mazdak the Younger (*al-akhīr*): the earlier Mazdak, he says, was the founder of the early *Khurramiyya* or Mazdakites, a Zoroastrian faction; he directed his followers to enjoy the pleasures of life and satisfy their appetite in the highest degree with regard to eating and drinking in a spirit of equality and friendly intercourse; to avoid dominating one another; to share in

[1] Cf. Nöldeke, *Ṭabari*, p. 461, n. 2; Christensen, pp. 59ff, 66ff; Klima, *Beiträge*, pp. 55ff.
[2] Presumably son of Khurrag, *-ān* being a patronymic suffix.
[3] Ṭabarī I, p. 893; Ya'qūbī I, p. 185; cf. Ibn Miskawaih I, p. 177.
[4] *Ton daristhenon.* See Christensen, pp. 96ff, for a discussion of this term.
[5] *Darasthenos* in the original for *daris-*.
[6] Ḥamza, p. 56; Tha'ālibī, p. 602; *Mujmal*, p. 36.
[7] Zoroastrian rather than Manichaean. See below.

women and family; to aim at good deeds; to abstain from shedding blood and inflicting harm on others; and to practise hospitality without reservation. Mazdak the Younger, who belonged to this sect, was the one who appeared under Kavād and was killed together with his followers by Khusrau.[1]

Christensen (pp. 98ff.) took Bundos as a title of Zardusht and surmised that it represented Middle Persian *bwyndk* or a similar form, meaning "le vénérable",[2] whereas Klima preferred not to identify the two.[3] Malalas' date of *ca.* 300 appears too early for Zardusht Khurragān, who seems closer to the time of Mazdak, judging by Islamic sources[4] as well as Pseudo-Joshua. Two conjectures may be considered. One is that the foundation of the sect coincided with the end of Zoroaster's millennium, when a Saviour (*sošyant*) was expected. One may see a faint indication of this in Niẓām al-Mulk's statement (p. 257) that Mazdak knew something of astrology and had seen that a man would rise up and would cancel all religions. Since the traditional date of Zoroaster was believed to have been 258 years before Alexander,[5] the millennium may have been expected by some to expire in the late 4th or early 5th century, depending on how the length of Alexander's life and the duration of the Seleucid rule were calculated. The second is to associate the heresy against which Adurbād Māraspandān is said to have undergone an ordeal of fire under Shapūr II with that of the Mazdakites.[6] For there is little doubt that the founder of Mazdakism, although introducing an esoteric doctrine close in many but not all respects to Manichaeism, presented his creed as the true interpretation of the Avesta and claimed to have reformed and purified the good religion of Zoroaster. This is what the great majority of our sources point out.[7] The statement of Mas'ūdī in this respect carries special weight, since he tells us (*al-Tanbīh*, p. 353) that he had had discussions with the Mazdakites of his time, and had treated of the various aspects

[1] P. 342.

[2] In the *Tārīkh-i Qumm*, pp. 86–8, mention is made of a Bilīnās (Apollonius of Tyana?), described as *ḥakīm* "sage", who effects a number of magical operations by order of Kavād. One wonders if his name is not mixed up with that of Bundos. Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 312, trans. p. 733.

[3] *Mazdak*, pp. 157ff.

[4] E.g. Ṭabarī I, p. 893. *Nihāyat*, p. 226, makes him even a contemporary of Mazdak.

[5] Henning, *Zoroaster*, pp. 35ff. Cf. S. Shahbazi, "The 'traditional date of Zoroaster' explained", *BSOAS* XL (1977), pp. 26ff.

[6] Bīrūnī (Fück, p. 76) places the appearance of an "anti-Zoroastrian" religion towards the end of Shāpūr II's reign.

[7] Ṭabarī I, p. 893; Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 342; Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 101; Bal'amī, p. 967; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā* (Cairo, 1913–20) XIII, p. 292; Firdausī, pp. 45ff; *Mujmal*, p. 73; Ibn al-Athīr, p. 314; Pseudo-Joshua, para. xx. Cf. Procopius I, xii, pp. 2–4, where Kavād is said to have urged the Iberians to follow "Zoroastrian" rites.

of the Mazdakite religion and its sectarian divisions at length in two separate works; and he appears indeed to be well informed about Mazdakite traditions; he states that "Mazdak was the interpreter (*al-muta'awwil*) of the Book of Zoroaster, the Avesta . . . and he is first among those who believed in interpretation (*ta'wīl*) and in inner meanings (*bāṭin*)."[1] A consideration of the term *zandīk* (Arab. *zindīq*) leads to the same conclusion; the term is a pejorative one meaning literally "interpretationist", and it is applied to the Manichaeans and their likes, but more particularly to the followers of Mazdak who had composed a *zand* or "interpretation" of the Avesta. The fact that the Mazdakites came to be considered the Zindīqs *par excellence* can be seen from Bīrūni, who says that the Manichaeans were called Zindīqs only metaphorically (*majāzan*).[2] And indeed it is not difficult to find passages even in the extant Avesta which could serve as a point of departure for Mazdakite social doctrine. We read in the *Vendīdād* IV. 44: "If fellow-believers (*hāmō-daēna*), brothers or friends, come to ask for money, wife, or wisdom (*xratu*), he who asks for money should be given money; he who asks for a wife should be given a wife to marry; he who asks for wisdom should be taught the holy word."

There is also internal evidence for the above argument. In his description of Mazdakite theology Shahristānī says that there are four spiritual powers standing before the throne of the supreme deity, like the four high ranking dignitaries at the king's court; two of these are the Mōbadān Mōbad and the chief *Hērbad*. This could hardly have come from a Manichaean base. In fact Kavād could not have adopted a Manichaean heresy without breaking the fabric of Zoroastrian society, whereas he could justify his adherence to a "reformed Zoroastrianism" without destroying the basic structure of the Zoroastrian Church. Had Mazdakism been an offshoot of Manichaean religion, as Christensen concludes,[3] the fact would not have been missed in the fairly extensive Manichaean literatures, nor by Ibn al-Nadīm, who gives a detailed and accurate account of the Manichaeans and their schisms (pp. 326–38).

The reason why in some sources Mazdak has been seen as a Manichaean sectarian[4] is not far to seek. The Mazdakites must have been accused by their detractors in Iran of Manichaeism, the arch heresy of the time. Malalas, who calls Mazdakism a Manichaean heresy, simply

[1] *Tanbīh*, p. 101.
[2] Fück, p. 79. See also Shahristānī, p. 185. Notwithstanding the fact that Kartīr uses the term for the Manichaeans (KKZ, l. 10); see p. 907.
[3] Pp. 98ff; cf. Klima, *Mazdak*, pp. 183ff, 296; *Beiträge*, pp. 23ff, 32ff.
[4] Malalas, *loc. cit.*; Theophanes, *loc. cit.*; Abu'l-Faraj (ed. Boulaq) VII, p. 63.

repeats what he had heard from his Persian informant, and Theophanes (d. 818) only follows him. The accusation must have been greatly facilitated by the fact that as a gnostic doctrine Mazdakism has unmistakable affinities with Manichaeism, and although, like Zoroastrianism and unlike Manichaeism, it appears to have maintained an essentially positive outlook on life, its brand of dualism, its moral philosophy, and its pacifistic outlook bring it closer to Manichaeism than Mazdaism. Al-Warrāq's remark that Mazdakism is close to Manichaeism,[1] based on his personal comparison of the two doctrines, by no means disproves that the Mazdakites originally claimed to be reformed Zoroastrians. This is an important point to grasp in order to appreciate a tradition of dissimulation among the Mazdakite sects in Islamic times. Unfortunately we know very little of Zoroastrian sectaries; else we may have found that gnostic religions had not failed to produce like-minded factions within Zoroastrianism.

THE SECOND STAGE OF MAZDAKISM

A second stage in the history of the sect is reached with Mazdak son of Bāmdād. Of his personal life little is known. He is said by Ṭabarī (I, p. 893) to have been a native of Madhariya,[2] and of a number of different localities by others. That he renewed the doctrine of Zardusht Khurragān and gave it a new impetus, to the extent that the sect came to be known by his name, is certain. The Islamic sources generally give a stereotyped account of Mazdak's doctrine which ignores his theology and centres on his social and moral teaching. One of the fullest of such accounts is found in Tha'ālibī: "Mazdak declared that God placed the means of subsistence (*arzāq*) on earth so that people divide them among themselves equally, in a manner that no one of them could have more than his share; but people wronged one another and sought domination over one another; the strong defeated the weak and took exclusive possession of livelihood and property. It is absolutely necessary that one take from the rich for giving to the poor, so that all become equal in wealth. Whoever possesses an excess of property, women or goods he has no more right to it than another."[3] Ṭabarī (I, p. 893) adds that

[1] Shahristānī, p. 193.

[2] The reading is doubtful, since the word lacks dots. For conjectures as to its location in Susiana or Iraq, and other possible birthplaces, see Klima, *Mazdak*, pp. 160ff, 174, n. 14. Altheim's reading of "Murghāb" in Madhariya via Mid. Pers. transliteration ("Mazdak und Porphyrios", pp. 368ff) is hardly tenable.

[3] P. 600. Similar accounts are found in most other Islamic sources, e.g. Ṭabarī I, pp. 885ff; Ya'qūbī I, p. 86; Ibn al-Balkhī, p. 84; Niẓām al-Mulk, p. 260. Cf. *Bundahishn*, p. 215.

Mazdak believed that such deeds were "an act of piety that pleased God and was rewarded by Him with the best of rewards".

Firdausī provides some further detail on the moral philosophy of the sect: men are turned from righteousness by five demons, envy, wrath, vengeance, need and greed; to prevail against these and to tread the path of the good religion, wealth and women must be made common.[1] One is led to assume that in Mazdakite cosmology the demons of Darkness included the personification of some moral vices, as is the case in the religions of Zoroaster and Mānī. They were to be held back and neutralized by removing competition over women and property.

Our sources do not specify any rules or regulations that Mazdak may have prescribed for a just distribution of women and wealth; they mostly linger on the alleged community of women, the resulting promiscuity, and its confusing effect on the line of descent – a standard accusation against heretical sects. It takes little insight to realize that the implementation of such principles would have been impossible. What seems more plausible is that Mazdak preached a series of measures to strip the higher classes of their privileges[2] and to help the poor. Among such measures were most probably the breaking up of large estates, prohibition of hoarding, adjustment of landlords' shares from crops, lowering of class distinctions, and instituting public foundations for the benefit of the needy. From the evidence of some communal villages in Islamic times we may conclude that Mazdak aimed, at least in rural areas, at communities where people would pool their resources and meet everyone's legitimate needs from the public funds (see below, pp. 1023f). A report in Ibn al-Faqīh (p. 247) and *Tārīkh-i Qumm* (p. 86), both taken from al-Mutawakkilī, a 9th-century author,[3] states that Mazdak had ordered the abolition of all fire temples except the three major ones, and as a result the fire in the village of Furdujān in Farāhān joined the fire of Gushnasb in Azarbāījān, only to return after the fall of the Mazdakites. From this report one gathers that Mazdak also aimed at a simplification of the Zoroastrian Church organisation, with attendant restrictions on church property.

Some of the Mazdakites' programmes and the measures carried out at their instigation can be gathered from the counter-measures of Khusrau, who sought to remedy popular discontent and meet some of

[1] VIII, p. 46.

[2] The insistence of the *Letter of Tansar* (pp. 12ff, 18ff; tr. M. Boyce, pp. 37ff, 43ff) on the merits of preserving class distinctions must reflect a reaction against Mazdakite views.

[3] See Jamālzāda, *Kāva* IV–V, p. 9, n. 4 on this author.

the Mazdakite grievances. According to Ṭabarī (I, pp. 879ff), he confiscated the properties of the Mazdakite leaders and distributed them among the poor; he executed many of those who had seized other people's properties and returned these to their owners; he ordered that those who had caused damage to other people's property should pay for it, and be punished as well in proportion to their transgressions; he decreed that a child whose descent was disputed should be attached to the family with which it lived; if a man had taken a woman by force he should give her her marriage portion (*mahr*) to the satisfaction of her family, and then she should be given the choice of staying with him or marrying someone else, except when she had had a previous husband, in which case she should return to him; he directed that the children of noble families who had no one to take care of them should be put in his charge; then he married the girls to men of their own rank, paying for their dowries from public funds, and took wives for the youths from among the nobility. Even though such reports cannot always be taken literally, they give an idea of the problems that Khusrau faced following the Mazdakite ascendancy.[1]

As to Mazdak's teachings with regard to women, most probably he approved of their marrying outside their own class. He must have prohibited having more than one wife and called for the abolition of harems and the releasing of additional wives, so that they could be married to those who were without one. One may perhaps assume, although we have no evidence for it, that he relaxed the marriage laws with regard to their financial provisions. Again, he probably liberalized the rules of levirate (*čakarī*) marriages and substitute (*stūrī*) successorship[2] which called usually for the widow or sister or daughter of a man who had died without a male heir to enter into a marriage without full rights (i.e. *sine manu mariti*) with an agnate of the deceased. Probably he had decreed that sons born of such marriages should be considered the legitimate sons and heirs of their natural parents rather than of the deceased man. To the orthodox Zoroastrians of course such modifications would mean disturbing the line of descent and destroying family and class distinctions. Khusrau must have restored many of the traditional customs, apparently with greater protection for women's rights than before.[3]

[1] Klima discusses in some detail the impact of the Mazdakites on Khusrau's reform in *Mazdak*, pp. 278–85. Cf. Pigulevskaja, pp. 229f.

[2] See pp. 649ff in this volume on these terms.

[3] From the activities that our sources attribute to two Mazdakite women, the alleged wife of Mazdak, Khurrama, and the wife of Jāvīdān b. Shahrak, one gathers that their conditions

THE THIRD STAGE OF MAZDAKISM

The third stage of the Mazdakite movement begins with the introduction of Islam in Iran. Khusrau's violent persecution of the sect, which must have continued throughout his long reign, sent the Mazdakites underground, but obviously failed to uproot them.[1] The presence of the Mazdakites in practically all parts of Iran during the early centuries of Islam is well attested, and our sources provide a detailed list of the regions where they had strength. They appear to have been particularly numerous in the Jibāl, Azarbāījān, around Iṣfahān and Ahvāz, as well as in Gurgān and Ṭabaristān, and in Khurāsān and Sogdiana.[2] Niẓām al-Mulk gives us to understand (p. 279) that at the time of Sunbād (755), and possibly in his own time, about half the people in the Jibāl and Iraq were Rāfiḍīs (here: the extremist Shī'īs) and Mazdakites. Even if this should represent some exaggeration, still it attests the strength of the Mazdakite presence in the region. With the crumbling of Sasanian power and the continual weakening of the Zoroastrian Church the Mazdakites found new breathing space. Our sources are silent on the activities of the sect in the first hundred years after the fall of the Sasanian empire, but they frequently link the characteristic beliefs of the extremist Shī'īs (*ghulāt*), namely, belief in the incarnation (*ḥulūl*) of the divinity in the prophets or imāms, reincarnation (*tanāsukh*), the occultation (*ghaiba*) and return (*raj'a*) of an imām, and recourse to the inner meanings (*bāṭin*) of the scriptures, with those of the Mazdakites.[3]

In this respect Shahristānī's remark (p. 132) is revealing; after summing up the chief doctrinal points of the extremist Shī'īs, he says that these extremists are called by different names in different places: in Iṣfahān they are called Khurramiyya and *Kūdakiyya*, in Rayy *Mazdakiyya* and *Sunbādiyya*, in Azarbāījān *Dhaqūliyya*, in some places *Muḥammira* and in Transoxiana *Mubayyiḍa*.[4] Obviously here Shahristānī wants to imply that the extremist Shī'īs were not truly Muslim, but belonged to the Mazdakite heresy. It is a fact that in doctrinal matters there is no great divergence between the ghulāt and the Mazdakites of the Islamic

had improved among the Mazdakites. It is noteworthy that among the Druzes, the élite (*'uqqāl*) could be either men or women. See Wesendonk, "Druzen", p. 128, col. 1.

[1] According to Ibn Qutaiba, p. 328, Khusrau banished the Mazdakite leaders.

[2] See Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 353; *Murūj* III, p. 27; Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 342; Narshakhī, p. 91; Yāqūt II, p. 568; IV, p. 607. Cf. P. Schwarz, *Iran im Mittelalter* VII (Leipzig, 1929), p. 858, on place names based on "Mazdak".

[3] See for instance Ash'arī, p. 438; Naubakhtī, pp. 32, 41; Baghdādī, p. 154; Shahristānī, pp. 109, 113, 132, 185.

[4] Cf. Niẓām al-Mulk, p. 311.

times. The ghulāt make their appearance when Shi'ism, originally a legitimist political movement, turns into a religious, insurrectionist one with doctrinal content.[1] The earliest focus of Shī'ī extremist views appears to be Mukhtār and his *mawālī* lieutenant and associate Abū 'Amra Kaisān,[2] who in 685 rose against the Umayyad Caliph and launched a *da'wa* (missionary propaganda) in the name of Muḥammad b. Ḥanafiyya, whom he called Mahdī. A large number of mawālīs, Persian in particular, responded to his da'wa and took part in his military operations. Although Mukhtār was eventually subdued and killed, and his army was dispersed, the ideas espoused by him survived, and manifested themselves in a large number of regroupings among his followers. The resulting factions and subfactions[3] often differed over the fate of the imām or the identity of his successor, but they were united in adherence to the basic tenets which distinguished the ghulāt, as well as in their generally subversive, anti-régime attitude. Our knowledge of the background of Mukhtār is defective, but there can be little doubt that there existed popular support for the ghulāt's doctrines in Iraq and western Iran.

In view of the practical identity of the extremist Shī'īs and Khurramīs (Neo-Mazdakites) in doctrine on the one hand, and the explicit identification of the two by our source on the other, we are led to the conclusion that it was the Mazdakites, now professing Islam, who primarily laid the groundwork for the factions known as extremist Shī'īs and inspired their ideas. Through them the Mazdakites found once more a vehicle for the expression of their revolutionary ideas and esoteric beliefs. Our sources occasionally mention other origins for the ghulāt, such as the Ṣabians or Babylonians, and modern scholars have differed in tracing their origin, some deriving them from Iranian sects, others tending towards the Ṣabians, the Ḥarranians or certain Judeo-Christian sects. However, nowhere are the indications by our sources, the identity of beliefs, and the plausibility of the historical circumstances clearer and more convincing than in the case of the Mazdakites, even though other peoples and sectaries in the Middle East, affected by gnostic and messianic beliefs prior to Islam, may have contributed to the formation of the ghulāt. It may be recalled that Mazdakism, which had penetrated

[1] Cf. Lewis, pp. 23ff.
[2] See Madelung, "Kaysān".
[3] See under Sabā'iyya, Kaisāniyya, Hāshimiyya, Hārithiyya, Rǎvandiyya, Khaṭṭābiyya, Rizāmiyya, Abūmuslimiyya and the splinter groups derived from them in major heresiographers, more particularly Naubakhtī, pp. 19ff; Ash'arī, pp. 5ff and 18ff; Baghdādī, pp. 18, 26ff; Malaṭī, pp. 26ff; Shahristānī, pp. 108–52; Ibn al-Jauzī, pp. 94ff. Iqbāl provides useful bibliography for each sect, pp. 249ff.

into Ḥīra under Kavād, had followers also among the Arabs,[1] and Kūfa, a centre of religious heterodoxy and schisms, must have become a focus for their activity. It may be also noted that it was in the Kūfa area that Ḥamdān Qarmāṭ organized the first communistic Qarmaṭī village colonies (see below).

Toward the end of the Umayyad period the Mazdakites rallied around Abū Muslim and intensified their activities. His murder by the command of al-Manṣūr in 755, however, was a grievous blow to them, since they did not consider him only as a political and military leader, but also, as our sources make clear, as a religious figure, equivalent to an imām in Shī'ī terminology. The bitter frustration of Abū Muslim's followers prompted a series of ghulāt-type religio-political movements, which are generally marked as having a Mazdakite basis. Two among these may be mentioned here. One was headed by Sunbād, a close associate and general of Abū Muslim, who rose in rebellion in 755, claimed that the spirit of Abū Muslim had entered into him, was generally regarded as a Mazdakite, and was accused of prompting libertinism.[2] His revolt was centred in Nīshāpūr, his birthplace, and Rayy, where he appears to have been stationed by Abū Muslim.

The other was launched by the famous al-Muqanna', "the Veiled Prophet of Khurāsān", who rose against the caliph al-Mahdī in 777 in Khurāsān, carried his mission to Transoxiana, was supported by the Mazdakites of the region (the Mubayyiḍa) including some Turks, and held out heroically for some eight years, until he was besieged and defeated in 785–6. He is said to have committed suicide by throwing himself into a fire to avoid captivity. As to his doctrine, Narshakhī, who has the most detailed account of him, says (pp. 90ff.) that he claimed that divinity had manifested itself in him, as it had manifested itself earlier in Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muḥammad and Abū Muslim. Bīrūnī is unequivocal about Muqanna''s affiliation with the Mazdakites: he says (p. 211), "He made obligatory for them (his followers) all the laws and institutions of Mazdak."[3]

In the 2nd and early 3rd centuries of Islam the Mazdakites are referred to under a number of names, the most frequent being Mazdakiyya, Khurramiyya or Khurramdīniyya, Muḥammira (Red-Badged or

[1] See Ya'qūbī I, p. 298; Ibn Qutaiba, *Ma'ārif*, p. 299; Maqdisī III, p. 167, IV, p. 31; Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 170, n. 1; Christensen, p. 77. See also above, p. 600.

[2] On Sunbād see in particular Ṭabarī III pp. 119ff; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj* VI, pp. 188ff; Niẓām al-Mulk, pp. 279ff; Sadighi, pp. 132ff.

[3] For other uprisings in the wake of Abū Muslim's murder see Browne I, pp. 308ff; Sadighi, pp. 111ff; Zarrīnkūb, pp. 459ff.

Red-Clothed), and Mubayyiḍa or Sapīd-jāmagān (White-Clothed). Among other appellations are those which are based on the names of their leaders: Jāvīdāniyya in the Jibāl and Azarbāījān, Bābakiyya in about the same regions, Māziyāriyya in Gurgān and Ṭabaristān, Sunbādiyya in Khurasān, Abūmuslimiyya chiefly in Khurāsān, and Muqanna'iyya in Transoxiana.[1] Qarmaṭī, Zindīq and Bāṭinī are also frequently used as synonyms for the Mazdakites. Our sources often use these terms in a rather imprecise manner and we are unable to gauge the local or factional differences which must have existed among the Mazdakites.

The sect most particularly associated and identified with the Mazdakites, and also the one that we know most about, is the Khurramiyya. It is important to realize the identity of these two religious movements, since on it depends the validity of our drawing on the latter's doctrines in order to enhance our knowledge of Mazdakism. The fact that the Khurramīs are the same as the Mazdakites emerges clearly from our sources, as Sadighi has already cogently shown (pp. 187ff, 197). Here I cite only a few of the relevant statements. Ibn al-Nadīm uses the two names interchangeably and says (p. 342): "The Khurramīs are two categories; the early Khurramīs . . . had been originally Zoroastrian, then their doctrine was reformed. . . . The founder of their doctrine was Mazdak. . . . As to the Babakite Khurramīs, their founder was Bābak al-Khurramī." Baghdādī (pp. 160ff) tells us the same thing concerning the Khurramīs: "They form two branches, one existed before Islam as the Mazdakites, the second is the Khurramdīnīs who appeared under Islam." Ibn Ḥazm (I, p. 34) confirms this: "The Mazdakites are the followers of Mazdak. . . . The Khurramīs, the disciples of Bābak, are a division of the Mazdakites." Abu'l-Ma'ālī Muḥammad, the author of *Bayān al-adyān*, (p. 22) implies the sameness of the Mazdakites and the Khurramīs by relegating the origin of the Khurramīs to pre-Islamic times. *Mujmal al-tawārīkh* (p. 353) explicitly traces the origin of the Khurramdīns to Mazdak. Ibn al-Jauzī (p. 102) commenting on the term "Khurramiyya" states that "it was a surname of the Mazdakites . . . and they called them Khurramiyya because they have basically the same religion and do not differ from them except in some details."[2] Thus we can entertain no doubts about the affiliation of the Sasanian Mazdakites and Islamic Khurramdīns.

[1] See Sadighi, pp. 107ff for details and the sources; also see *Tabṣirat al-'awamm*, pp. 178f.

[2] On Khurramīs and their affinity with the Mazdakites and like-minded sects, see further Ṭabarī II, p. 1588; Naubakhtī, pp. 32f.; Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 353; Bīrūnī (Fück, p. 79); Ibn Isfandiyār, pp. 212, 220; Sam'ānī, f. 196a; Narshakhī, p. 93; Shahristānī, pp. 185, 194; Isfarā'inī in Flügel, "Babek", pp. 531ff, 533, n.; Niẓām al-Mulk, pp. 254ff.

Several explanations have been offered by our sources for the term Khurram-dīn; one derives it from Khurrama, the name of the alleged wife of Mazdak,[1] and another connects it with a district called Khurram, near Ardabīl;[2] both bear the marks of a popular etymology. The preferred explanation is of course the one which derives it from the Persian word *khurram* "happy, cheerful". It appears that the founder of Mazdakism had preached a religion of peace and happiness through disdaining material possessions, avoiding competition and dispute, giving freely of oneself, and enjoying the amenities of life in moderation.[3] As will be seen later, in Mazdakite theology one of the four spiritual forces which govern the world is Joy (*surūr*), represented in the mesocosm by *Rāmishgar* (the Entertainment Master). Sadighi (p. 195) rightly compares *khurram-dīn* with *veh-dēn* "Zoroastrian" and *dərist-dēn*, mentioned above.[4]

The Khurramites became particularly active under Bābak, who assumed the leadership of the sect in northwestern, western and central Iran about 816 after the death of Jāvidān b. Shahrak, whose reincarnation Bābak claimed to be. He rebelled against the ʿAbbasid caliph and held out for some twenty years, ruling over considerable parts of the Jibāl, Azarbāijān, and the adjoining regions until 837, when he was defeated and executed. With the fall of Bābak the hopes of the Mazdakites of turning the tables against the ʿAbbasids and effecting a revolutionary programme were dashed. They had worked assiduously for the overthrow of the Umayyads, but when they appeared to have succeeded they found the conservative ʿAbbasids a formidable barrier to the realization of their dreams. Their relentless persecution as Khurramīs, Rāfiḍīs, Zindīqs and the like pushed them further underground and encouraged their assimilation to Islamic sects. But their traces as Mazdakites or Khurramites can be seen up to the Mongol period[5] and beyond. Niẓām al-Mulk mentions (p. 391) their sporadic uprisings up to the end of the 3rd century of Islam, and Maqdisī and Masʿūdī, both of the 10th century, had personal contacts with Khurramīs. More striking, however, is a report by Mustaufī, according to which, while the people of Rūdbār of Qazvīn had been Bāṭinīs and now (i.e. at the time of the author, 14th cent.) were professing Islam, a community which is called

[1] Niẓām al-Mulk, p. 279; *Mujmal*, p. 354.

[2] Yāqūt II, p. 427.

[3] Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 342, and Malaṭī, p. 91.

[4] Ibn al-Balkhī's pejorative *khwār-din* "of base religion" (p. 23) appears to be a sarcastic reference either to one of the two surnames or yet another.

[5] See Spuler, *Iran*, p. 206, for the references, and *idem*, *Die Mongolen in Iran* (Berlin, 1968), p. 241, n. 10.

the Marāghīs are alleged to be Mazdakites.[1] This is particularly interesting since the group still exists under this very name and occupies some seven villages in the area. It is a closed community whose members profess Shi'ism, but do not intermarry with other Shī'īs, do not take more than one wife, have secret rites which involve solemn vows upon initiation, avoid as much as possible eating non-Marāghī food, have strict rules concerning cleanliness and purifications, have excommunicated some former Marāghī villages whose inhabitants did not stand by their vows, support each other as a community, and have preserved a much more conservative dialect than their neighbours.[2] However, after the 3rd century, it is mostly among the Bāṭinīs, Qarmatīs and some other extremist Shī'īs that we must seek the relics of the Khurramīs.[3]

THE MAZDAKITE DOCTRINE

Our sources, focusing on the Mazdakite social doctrine, are conspicuously reticent on Mazdakite theology. The sole exception is Shahristānī (d. 1153); according to his short quotation from al-Warrāq and other sources (pp. 193ff.) the Mazdakites believed in two primordial principles, Light and Darkness. Light is endowed with knowledge and feeling, and acts by design and free will, whereas Darkness is ignorant and blind, and acts at random and without direction. The admixture of the two is the result of pure accident, as will be their separation.

The Mazdakites believed, Shahristānī continues, in three elements, Water, Fire and Earth. From the mingling two beings arose, the Manager of Good (*Mudabbir al-khair*) and the Manager of Evil. The Supreme Being[4] is seated on his throne (*kursī*) in the world above, as the king of kings (*khusrau*) is seated in the world below; four Powers (*quwā*) stand before him: Discernment (*tamyīz*), Understanding (*fahm*), Preservation (*ḥifẓ*)[5] and Joy (*surūr*), as there are four persons before the king of kings, namely, the Mōbadān Mōbad,[6] the Chief Hērbad,[7] the Commander of the Army (*sepāhbad*), and the Entertainment Master

[1] *Nuzhat*, p. 61.

[2] On Maraghī communities see E. Yarshater, *Nashriyya-yi Īrān-shināsi* I (1967), pp. 169ff.

[3] Cf. Spuler, *Iran*, p. 204.

[4] The text has *ma'būduhu* "his object of worship" that is, Mazdak's.

[5] Not "memory" as Christensen translates (p. 81), which would not correspond to its counterpart on earth; also, its opposite *nisyān* is to be understood as "neglect" rather than "forgetfulness"; see below.

[6] To be understood as the Chief Judge; see Bīrūnī, p. 209; Khwārazmī, p. 37; *Nihāyat*, p. 227.

[7] To be understood as the chief religious doctor.

(rāmishgar).[1] The four powers direct the world with the help of seven viziers[2] who act within a circle of twelve spiritual forces.[3] When the four powers and the seven and twelve come together (*ijtamaʿat*) in a human being, he becomes godly (*rabbānī*) and no longer subject to religious duties (*irtafaʿa ʿanhu al-taklīf*). The Supreme Being reigns by the power of the letters, of which the total sum constitutes the Supreme Name (*al-ism al-aʿẓam*). Men who come to understand something of these letters[4] have found the key to the Great Secret (*al-sirr al-akbar*). Those who are deprived will remain in blindness, ignorance, neglect and dullness.[5]

From Shahristānī's use of *khabṭ* (to hit, stumble, act vehemently or without direction) for the manner in which Darkness acts, one may conclude that the encounter of Light and Darkness was the result of the latter's blind stumbling. But Shahristānī's report that their separation also depends on hazard is somewhat baffling. Not only does such a doctrine contradict the belief in the intelligence and the free will of Light, but it does not leave room for working out a course of salvation, which alone could have been the purpose of Mazdakite teaching. Further it contradicts a statement by Maqdisī (II, pp. 20–1) about the Khurramīs' belief that the stars and the moon attract men's souls and pass them on to higher stages, a belief which is akin to that of the Manichaeans and points to a conscious design of redemption. What is meant by al-Warrāq must refer therefore not to men's souls, but to that part of Light which is darkened beyond the hope of active redemption.

Shahristānī's precious account, concise as it is, puts in relief the character and basic tenets of Mazdakite theology. These may be summarized as belief (1) in a fundamental dualism, not far from that of Zoroastrianism or Manichaeism; (2) in three elements, compared to Zoroastrian four and Manichaean five; (3) in the remoteness of the supreme deity, as evinced by the postulation of the two demiurgical "managers"; (4) in a spiritual macrocosm, reflected in the mesocosm of our world, and mirrored in the microcosm of man; (5) in the symbolic

[1] According to Jāḥiẓ, *al-Tāj*, p. 28, Bahram V elevated the entertainers at the court to the highest rank; cf. *ibid.*, p. 159.

[2] These have all Persian names, e.g. *sālār*, *pēškār*, etc.; see Christensen, p. 81; Klima, *Mazdak*, pp. 188ff, for a discussion of them.

[3] *Khwābanda*, *dabanda*, *stānanda*, etc. Shahristānī lists however thirteen; see Klima, *loc. cit.*; Altheim's emendation of some of these terms (pp. 362–3) is somewhat arbitrary.

[4] Presumably those who are initiated in the Mazdakite mysteries.

[5] Notice that these are the opposite in meaning of the four Powers.

power of letters, words, and numbers as keys to the redemptive knowledge; and (6) in irrelevance of religious obligations and therefore the outward meaning of religious prescriptions, once a revelatory knowledge of the essence or the "secret" of religion is gained. Such beliefs, which are typical of a gnostic religion, bring Mazdakism unmistakably within the orbit of the syncretistic faiths which developed in the early Christian centuries with an admixture of Iranian, Syro-Babylonian and Hellenic thought.

Shahristānī's account, however, leaves many gaps in our knowledge; he tells us almost nothing about Mazdakite eschatology, or the creations of the evil principle, or the nature and function of prophethood. Fortunately we are in a position to amplify the data provided by him from other accounts.

The major fount for our purpose is information about the Mazdakites in Islamic times. The survival of the sect after the Sasanian period has already been discussed. It has also been shown that the Khurramīs were a continuation of the Mazdakites and were known to be such to the best of our sources. Now the great majority of these sources confine their remarks about Khurramī teachings to hostile expressions against their alleged relaxation of religious obligations, their anti-Islamic way of life and their sexual promiscuity. However, two of them, Naubakhtī (d. between 912 and 922) and Maqdisī (writing in 966), give us a welcome insight into Khurramī beliefs and practices. The latter's account is particularly important since he informs us that he had had personal contacts with Khurramīs in western Iran, and he indeed displays a sober, unbiased tone in his report. "The Khurramīs," he writes (IV, pp. 30–1), "are divided in sects and divisions; they are, however, all united in believing in the doctrine of return (*raj'a*); they believe in the change of names and bodies; they profess that the prophets, despite the difference of their laws and their religions, do not constitute but a single spirit, and that revelation is never discontinued;[1] they maintain that every man of religion, so long as he entertain hope of reward and fear of punishment, is on the right path (*muṣīb*) and cannot be insulted or considered a transgressor so long as he does not attempt to endanger their community and destroy their religion; they avoid carefully the shedding of blood, except when they raise the banner of revolt; they revere Abū Muslim and curse Abū Ja'far for his having him killed; they have many prayers for Mahdī b. Fīrūz, the son of Fāṭima, Abū Muslim's daughter;

[1] Cf. Bīrūnī (Fück, p. 80), "The Mazdakites say that the world is never without a prophet."

they have imāms, to whom they refer for decisions (*aḥkām*), and prophets who go in circles (*yadūrūn*) among them, and whom they call apostles (*firīshtagān*); they seek the greatest sacramental effect from wine and drinks; the basis of their doctrine is belief in light and darkness; those whom we met from among the Khurramīs in their regions – in Māsabadhān and Mihrajān-qadhaq – were extremely concerned with cleanliness and purification, and with approaching people with kindness and beneficence; we found some among them who believed in free sex, provided that women agreed to it, and also in the freedom of enjoying all pleasures and of satisfying one's inclinations so long as this does not entail any harm to others."

Maqdisī touches on Khurramī beliefs in two other passages: one occurs in the course of his discussion of dualism, where he observes (I, p. 143) "The Khurramīs are one of the categories of the Mazdaeans (*al-majus*) . . . who cover themselves under the guise of Islam. They believe that the principle of the universe is Light, of which a part has been effaced and has turned into Darkness." The other (II, pp. 20f.) concerns the release of the particles of Light and has a decidedly Manichaean ring to it: "I have read in the book of the Khurramīs that the stars are spheres and holes (*thuqab*); that they attract the souls of the creatures and deliver them to the moon, which begins to wax; when it grows full it sends these souls to that which is above it and vomits; then it starts receiving the souls which are sent to it until it waxes full again."

Before commenting on Maqdisī's report it will be helpful first to consider the information furnished by Naubakhtī and a few other sources. In discussing the factions which derived from the sect of Kaisāniyya, Naubakhtī writes as follows on the Khurramdīniyya (pp. 32–3):[1] ". . . it was with them that extremist beliefs (*ghulūw*) began; they even maintained that the imāms were God, were prophets, apostles and angels; it was they who talked about shadowy existences (*aẓilla*) and discoursed on transmigration of souls; they believed in cyclic periods (*daur*) in this world, they negated the resurrection, the raising of the dead and the accounting; they were of the opinion that there was no world but this world, and that resurrection consisted of the exit of the soul from the body and its entering in a different body –

[1] The author begins this section by saying "From them (Kaisāniyya and their likes) derived the sects of the Khurramdīniyya," which is an error, since the Kh. had their origin in pre-Islamic times. It also contradicts his statement that extremist beliefs began with the Khurramiyya.

a good one if it had been good and a bad one if it had been evil – and that the souls are either happy or tormented in these bodies, and these bodies are (what is meant by) heaven and hell...." The rest of Naubakhtī's statement consists of an elaboration of the Khurramīs' belief in metempsychosis and of quotations of Quranic verses that the Khurramīs interpreted in such a way as to support their doctrine of metempsychosis.

Another passage in Naubakhtī on the extremist Shī'īs (pp. 41–2) is also of interest; "These are the sects of extremist views," he states, "who have disguised themselves as Shī'īs, whereas they have their origin in the Khurramdīnīs, Mazdakīs, Zindīqs and Dahrīs...." Then commenting on the Abūmuslimiyya sect, the followers of Abū Muslim, he continues: "They believed in his imamate and claimed that he was living and would never die; they believed in the cancellation of religious prescriptions and the abandonment of all religious obligations, and defined the faith as only the knowledge of their imām; therefore they were called Khurramdīnīs, and to their origin refers the Khurramī sect."

We may add here also Shahristānī's statement on the subject (p. 185): "The Khurramdīnīs believe in two principles and tend toward believing in metempsychosis and incarnation." From another passage in the same author (p. 113) we infer that the Khurramīs denied the day of judgement and believed in the realization of reward and punishment in this world.

A few passages in our sources provide some information on Khurramī rituals. Niẓām al-Mulk states that when the Khurramīs have a meeting they begin by lamenting the death of Abū Muslim, and they constantly curse his killer and call blessings on Mahdī b. Fīrūz the son of Fāṭima, Abū Muslim's daughter. Several authors have mentioned orgiastic celebrations among the Khurramīs,[1] but there is no evidence to support such accusations. On the contrary the following description of a ritual of *bai'a* and marriage which we find in Ibn al-Nadīm (p. 344) proves the validity of marriage rites among them. In brief, when Jāvīdān the leader of the Khurramīs passed away, his wife, who according to this account was in love with Bābak, arranged for his introduction to Jāvīdān's soldiers (*jaish*) as the latter's rightful successor, and then entered into marriage with him. "She called for a cow," says Ibn al-Nadīm, "and ordered that it be slaughtered and flayed, and its skin

[1] E.g. Baghdādī, p. 161; Isfarā'inī, *loc. cit.*

spread out; then she placed on the skin a bowl filled with wine and into it she broke bread, which she placed round about the bowl. She called them (the soldiers) one by one, and told each one to tread on the skin with his foot, and take a piece of bread, plunge it into the wine, and eat it, saying 'I believe in you, O spirit of Bābak, as I believed in the spirit of Jāvīdān'; each was then to take the hand of Bābak, do obeisance and kiss it. This they did until such time as food was made ready for her. Then she brought food and wine to them, seated Bābak on her bed, and sat beside him publicly before them. When they had drunk three draughts each, she took a sprig of basil and offered it to Bābak, and this was their marriage. Then they (the soldiers) came forth and did obeisance to the two, acknowledging their marriage."[1] This report, which sounds quite authentic, contains many points of interest and reveals the un-Islamic, Iranian nature of Khurramī rituals, as well as their simplicity.[2]

As can be readily seen, the accounts of the Khurramīs throw important light on Mazdakite doctrine and fill many gaps that Shahristānī had left. Naturally we must allow for the changes and adjustments that the lapse of several centuries, continued persecution, the absence of a central authority, and above all the spread of Islam and the Mazdakite simulation of the Muslim faith, had brought about. Yet what emerges is a fairly consistent body of doctrine and practice, giving Mazdakism a much clearer outline than has been generally assumed.

By combining and comparing the accounts of N(aubakhtī), I(bn al-Nadīm), M(aqdisī) and Sh(ahristānī) we may formulate the Khurramī or Neo-Mazdakite doctrine as follows:

Cosmology: (1) belief in the two primordial principles of Light and Darkness (M. and Sh.); (2) darkness as an effaced form of Light (N.).

Theology: (1) denial of God as active Providence (N.); (2) the essential unity of all prophetic, apostolic and angelic epiphanies (N., M. and Sh.); (3) occultation or return of divine leaders (M.); (4) continuity of revelation (I. and M.); (5) recognition of the imām as the essence of religion (implying antinomianism) (N.); (6) esoteric meaning of the scriptures (N.); (7) Abū Muslim as an incarnation of the divine spirit (M. and N.) and as an immortal (N.).

Eschatology: (1) denial of the resurrection and final judgement (N., M.

[1] With some modifications from Browne's translation (p. 327).

[2] Widengren has seen a trace of Mithraic rites in the inclusion of a cow-slaughter in the ceremony, as well as in some other aspects of the ritual. See his "Bābakīyah and the Mithraic Mysteries", in *Mysteria Mithrae*, ed. Ugo Bianchi (Leiden, 1979), pp. 667–95.

and Sh.); (2) reincarnation as the true meaning of resurrection (N., M. and Sh.).

Ethics: (1) prohibition of the shedding of blood except during insurrection (I. and M.); (2) tolerance of individual religious views within a broad framework of faith (M.); (3) beneficence and good will towards others (I. and M.); (4) enjoyment of pleasures (I. and M.) without causing harm to others (M.).

Ritual: (1) importance of purification and cleanliness (M.); (2) use of wine (I. and M.) and bread (I.) in the ceremonies of marriage, allegiance, etc.; (3) opening meetings with the calling of blessings on the spiritual leaders; (4) prayers.

Several observations may be made here. Whereas Shahristānī's account of the Mazdakites focuses on cosmogony and cosmology, Naubakhtī's and Maqdisī's accounts of the Khurramīs emphasize theology. Their Islamic character probably explains the almost complete absence of mythological information in them. Darkness, as a totally independent principle, is little spoken of, and Light as the divine principle is given prominence. This too may reflect a gradual, defensive response to Islamic monotheism as well as the spreading of the Neoplatonic notion of creation through emanation and the gradation of Light.

On the ethical level, the accounts in our sources reveal two contradictions. One concerns worldly pleasures: on the one hand Mazdakites are said to have favoured asceticism; on the other they are depicted as Epicureans and hedonists. A tendency within Mazdakism to shun worldly pleasures cannot be denied. A reference to this is to be found in the Pahlavi *Vendīdād* IV. 49, where Mazdak son of Bāmdād is mentioned in a gloss as a heretic despot who imposed hunger on others but he himself ate fully. Shahristānī (p. 193) quotes a report which confirms this ascetic aspect: "Mazdak commanded the killing of [tempted] souls (*anfus*) in order to release them from evil and from the admixture with Darkness." And yet we are faced with other reports, notably by Ibn al-Nadīm and Mas'ūdī, which depict the Mazdakites as almost encouraged to satisfy their needs and enjoy the pleasures of life. I believe that the contrasting attitudes are expressive of two opposite tendencies which must have developed within the faith. The founder of Mazdakism taught a pacifistic creed which prohibited the shedding of blood and infliction of harm on others; he admonished his followers to resist the temptation of the demons of greed, wrath, envy, vengeance,

and possessiveness, all agents of evil (Firdausī, p. 46), but allowed, at least for the bulk of believers, enjoyment of life in moderation and without competition and without causing suffering to others. While the common believers partook of the good things of life without guilt or inhibition, some of the élite or possibly some factions gave themselves to self-denial as an expression of piety – a development also known in Islam and several other faiths.

The other contrast concerns the wars in which some Mazdakites, notably Bābak, were involved despite the prohibition against killing. Here Maqdisī has the answer for us from the Khurramīs he had known: when a situation justifies insurrection, killing is also justified. We must assume that the circumstances of Kavād's time, as already noted, turned the Mazdakites into militant sectaries and established a tradition of armed insurrection among them.

The transformation of an ethical, pacifistic doctrine aimed at the salvation of souls into a militant ideology bent on correcting social injustice need not surprise us. We find another example of a similar transformation in the career of the Safavids, who moved from Ṣūfī beginnings to an aggressive militancy in the course of the 15th century, as circumstances demanded.

Ibāḥa is mentioned by both Naubakhtī and Maqdisī as a matter of course, but is clearly contradicted by the assertion of the Khurramīs' concern for cleanliness, honesty,[1] avoiding harm to others, and by the institutions of marriage and prayers among them. Obviously the Khurramīs felt bound to honour their religious obligations, which, however, differed from those of the Muslims.

We may add a word about Mazdakite saints. Apart from Bundos, Zardusht Khurragān, and Mazdak, our sources indicate a Sharvīn in pre-Islamic times, whom according to Baghdādī (p. 161) and Isfarā'inī[2] the Khurramīs placed above all prophets, and to whom they directed prayers and mourning dirges. He appears to have been one of the Mazdakite martyrs, possibly the *andarzgar* who according to Malalas and Theophanes led the Mazdakite church at the time of the massacre and was killed in the course of it.[3]

In Islamic times Abū Muslim figures among their spiritual leaders as an incarnation of the divine. The Mazdakite background of Abū Muslim has not been adequately probed. Apart from his exalted

[1] Cf. Narshakhī, p. 103. [2] In Flügel, "Bābek", p. 533.
[3] See Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. 462, n. 3; Christensen, p. 123.

position as a spiritual leader among practically all Mazdakite factions, the sect of Abūmuslimiyya, which is sometimes a synonym of the Khurramdīnīs,[1] takes its name from him. This is not the place to explore his career, but there are many indications in our sources which point to his affiliation with the Mazdakites. If this affiliation does not emerge more clearly from our sources it must be partly because of the tradition of dissimulation among the Mazdakites,[2] and partly on account of Abū Muslim's concern for a universal appeal of his *da'wa*. But among the Mazdakites themselves no ambiguity appears to have existed. His daughter Fāṭima, and his grandson Mahdī b. Fīrūz also figure among the Mazdakites' saints, as we have seen. The Khurramī faction of Kūdakiyya[3] apparently took its name from this Mahdī, who was called according to Niẓām al-Mulk (p. 320) Kūdak-i Dānā (the Knowing Child). It appears that the Mazdakites while outwardly professing a form of extremist Shi'ism, acknowledged among themselves the "imamate" of Abū Muslim and his descendants. We are in the dark as to whom they considered as such before Abū Muslim or after his grandson. Later, however, they seem to have shifted their allegiance to Ismā'īlī imāms.

Put together, the statements we have from Ibn al-Nadīm, Firdausī, Shahristānī, Naubakhtī, and Maqdisī give us a tolerably clear idea of the Mazdakite doctrine and its development. I believe however that we can go one step further; in other words there is yet another general source we can tap in order to increase our insight into the beliefs of the Mazdakites, and that is the accounts given of the early Bāṭinīs. As is well known, the Bāṭinī doctrine cannot claim a precise founder or a distinct beginning; it is equally well known that the Bāṭinī creed in its early, revolutionary form has altogether little to do with Islamic tenets; it is generally agreed that its doctrinal content represents beliefs and traditions inherited from the pre-Islamic Middle East. On the specific source of such beliefs, however, there has been less agreement.[4] Perhaps it is true that the whole spectrum of Bāṭinī and affiliated sects cannot be attributed to a single source, and Persian as well as Syro-Babylonian gnostic traditions all contributed to it. But if one were to single out one source as the major contributor, it cannot but be the widely spread but carefully concealed religion of the Khurramīs or Neo-Mazdakites. This is borne out not only by the close similarity of their teachings, but also by the testimony of our sources.

[1] See Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 345.
[2] See Baghdādī, pp. 161, 171, 177; Narshakhī, p. 103.
[3] Shahristānī, pp. 132, 194.
[4] See B. Lewis, pp. 19ff, 97, for a brief survey of opinions.

Niẓām al-Mulk opens his long account of the Bāṭinīs by saying (p. 257) that the one who started the sect was Mazdak, and continues with a detailed report on the Mazdakites as the precursors of the Bāṭinīs. Bīrūnī confirms that there was a close relationship between the Mazdakites, and the Bāṭinīs, Zindīqs and Khurramīs,[1] as does Mas'ūdī, who asserts that Mazdak was the first among those who believed in "interpretation" and esoteric meanings (bāṭin).[2] Baghdādī, who gives us a detailed and useful, if hostile, account of the Bāṭinīs, and who has obviously studied them, asserts (p. 171) that the Khurramīs, who were Mazdakites, and the Bāṭinīs coalesced at the time of Bābak (literally, "became a single hand"). Further he says that "The historians have mentioned that those who founded the Bāṭinī religion were the descendants of the Zoroastrians (*majūs*) and tended to the religion of their forefathers, but did not dare to express it for fear of the Muslim's swords..." (*ibid.*). Of course Baghdādī is mistaken if he intends to relate the Bāṭinīs to the Zoroastrians, since there is no community of ideas between the two, but he is conscious of the pre-Islamic, Persian origin of the sect, and by majūs he most probably means "Iranian".

Shahristānī affirms the identity of the Bāṭinīs and Mazdakites clearly, when he says that the Bāṭinīs have different names in different regions and that they are called Bāṭinīs, Qarmaṭīs and Mazdakites in Iraq.[3] Sam'ānī (f. 196a) subsumes the Khurramīs under the Bāṭinīs. "Khurramī," he says, "... pertains to a group of Bāṭinīs who are called Khurramdīnīs." And Niẓām al-Mulk, after a long account of Mazdakites and their Islamic off-shoots, concludes (p. 320) that "it must have become evident that the origin of the religion of Mazdak, Khurrama-dīns and Bāṭinīs, all three, is one". Such assertions are very different from the vague attributions of the origin of the Baṭinīs to some other source (e.g. in Baghdādī, p. 177, who quotes different views on their origin). Massignon, who favoured a Ṣabean origin, could not even decide whether one should understand by the Ṣabeans the people of Ḥarrān or the Mandaeans of southern Iraq[4] – so ambiguous are such attributions.

Further we notice that among the earliest known Bāṭinī activists there is a preponderance of Persian *mawālī* (Ḥusain al-Ahwāzī, Maimmūn al-Qaddāḥ, Dindān, Abū Sa'īd al-Jannābī, Ibn Zikrawaih, etc.), and the earliest centres of the Bāṭinī da'wa in Iran[5] are those regions

[1] Fück, p. 79. [2] *Tanbīh*, p. 101.
[3] P. 147; cf. pp. 132, 185. It is noteworthy that Malaṭī (pp. 26ff) puts the Qarmaṭīs and the Dailam (meaning Khurramīs) together in one group and then gives a Bāṭinī account of their beliefs. [4] "Ḳarmaṭians".
[5] Madelung, "Ismā'īliyya", p. 198, col. 1.

which are also identified by our sources as the centres of the Mazdakites. If we add the testimony of our sources to the close similarity of early Bāṭinī doctrine and that of the Khurramīs and of the extreme Shī'īs, there should remain little doubt that the Mazdakites attempted to advance their views through the Bāṭinī movement and must have inspired many of its tenets; and that therefore it is legitimate to draw on Bāṭinī teachings in order to further our knowledge of Mazdakite beliefs. The early Bāṭinīs were in possession of a cosmological myth, according to which the divine imperative *kun* (be!) formed the two original principles of *kūnī* and *qadar*, female and male, respectively. The seven letters of Kūnī and Qadar (*qdr*) were considered to be the archetypes of the seven messenger prophets and their revelations.[1] From the two first principles came into being three spiritual powers, *jadd* (divine Glory or Fortune), *fatḥ* (Victory) and *khiyāl* (Imagination, or *Imaginatio Gloriae* according to H. Corbin),[2] corresponding to the three archangels Gabriel, Michael and Israphel. Although we do not find this myth recorded for the Mazdakites or Khurramīs, it appears to be a variant of that of two demiurgical deities proceeding from a supreme godhead. As to the three spiritual powers, Corbin has clearly shown[3] their Iranian conceptual origin, particularly through the writings of Abū Ya'qūb Sijistānī (10th century), who translates jadd as *bakht* (Fortune), another expression in this context for the Iranian *farrah*.[4]

Essential in the Bāṭinī teachings was the distinction between the outward or exoteric meaning (*ẓāhir*) of the revelation, which changes with every prophetic cycle, and the inward or esoteric meaning (bāṭin), namely, the unchangeable truths concealed in the prophets' revealed messages. The bāṭin can be revealed through interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the scriptures by divinely inspired imāms to the properly initiated believers. The ta'wīl "is often of a cabalistic nature relying on the mystical significance of letters and numbers".[5] One hardly needs to stress the essential unity of these doctrines with those of the Khurramīs.

The cyclical hierohistory of the Bāṭinīs is based on the number seven. Each cycle is inaugurated by a messenger prophet, the bāṭin of whose message is revealed by a legatee (*waṣī*) or fundament (*asās*) or imām. The seventh imām in each cycle rises to the rank of a messenger prophet (*nāṭiq*) and begins a new cycle abrogating the law of the previous prophet. The seventh imām in Muḥammad's cycle is Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, who

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 203, col. 1. [2] Corbin, pp. 104ff. [3] Pp. 91ff.

[4] *Kitāb al-yanābi'* in H. Corbin, *Trilogie ismaelienne* (Tehran–Paris, 1961), pp. 8ff.

[5] Madelung, *ibid.*

on his return as Mahdī or Qā'im will abrogate the law of Islam, fully revealing the bāṭin of religion.[1]

We have taken note of Shahristānī's statements concerning the Mazdakites and the Khurramīs. We may briefly consider his exposition of the "early" Bāṭinī doctrine for comparison.

In brief, according to Shahristānī (pp. 147ff), the early Bāṭinīs (*al-baṭiniyyat al-qadīma*) did not express themselves positively as to the nature and attributes of the Creator (*al-bārī'*), since this would imply likening him (*tashbīh*) to creatures. They would only say that he was God (*Allāh*) of the two Opposites (*mutaqābilain*) and the creator of the two Adversaries (*khaṣmain*) and the judge between them.[2] Here Shahristānī continues with a Neoplatonic account of the cosmology, involving the origins of the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul, the Elements and the Compounds, etc., which is not of particular interest to us in this context. In the latter part of his exposition he states that the prophetic cycles are based on the number seven. Each new cycle constitutes a resurrection and does away with all obligations and cancels all traditions and laws of the previous cycle. The Great Resurrection (*al-qiyāmat al-kubrā*) occurs when the souls have succeeded in perfecting themselves and have reached the rank of the Intellect; at this time the spheres, the Elements and the Compounds dissolve, heaven is torn asunder, the stars are dispersed, the earth becomes non-earth and the sky is rolled up; people are called to account, and good and evil are distinguished. The particles of Truth (*juz'iyyāt al-ḥaqq*) join the Universal Soul and the particles of falsehood return to the false Satan.[3] All obligations, customs, and laws on earth, adds Shahristānī, have a counterpart in the world above in the same way that the composition of letters and words corresponds to that of forms and bodies. Each letter has a counterpart in the world above which affects the souls in this world by its nature. The knowledge obtained from "words imparting authoritative knowledge" (*al-kalimāt al-ta'līmiyya*) is food for souls, in the same way that nourishment obtained from Compounds is food for bodies.[4] Drawing such correspondences was the way of the forebears of the Bāṭinīs (*ṭarīqa aslāfihim*); they wrote books on it, and called people

[1] See Madelung, *ibid.*, for a concise exposition of early Bāṭinī doctrine, and *idem*, "Khaṭṭābiyya".

[2] For the Zurvanite implications of this doctrine cf. pp. 973ff.

[3] A conclusion common to most dualistic doctrines. Here Satan obviously stands for the evil principle.

[4] Other Bāṭinī sources, notably Abū Ya'qub Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-yanābī'*, pp. 8ff, well illustrate the Neoplatonic, letterist and esoteric aspects of the doctrine.

in every period to an imām who would have knowledge of these correspondences and would instruct the people.[1]

If we study the pre-Faṭimid Bāṭinī doctrine we will notice that with the exception of a Neoplatonic scheme of creation it agrees in all essentials with Shahristānī's report on Mazdakite doctrine, with belief in (1) an ineffable, remote supreme god; (2) two demiurgical, opposing deities; (3) a macrocosm corresponding to a mesocosm and a microcosm; (4) cabalistic interpretation of letters and numbers as the key to religious mysteries; and (5) esoteric knowledge as the essence of religion and redemption. From the Khurramī doctrine we have learnt that the Neo-Mazdakites, like the Bāṭinīs, also believed in cyclical periods of revelation and in an allegorical interpretation of the resurrection.[2] As to the Neoplatonic genesis of the universe, which obviously does not conform to a strictly dualistic notion of the world, it is no doubt a later modification of the dualistic cosmogony, intended for the more sophisticated believers.[3] The belief in the Day of Judgement on the part of the Bāṭinīs mentioned by Shahristānī appears, however, to be an exoteric one, meant only for the novices.

Naturally we cannot be precise, given the state of our sources, about the development of the Mazdakite doctrine at various stages; nor can we be always certain how much of the Bāṭinī and Khurramī beliefs can be safely attributed to the earlier stages of the faith. But, on the other hand, we cannot deny the endurance and continuity of Mazdakite concepts in the Islamic period under different guises; nor should we reject the Islamic forms of Mazdakism as a source of valuable information.

CONCLUSION

We may then chart the course of the Mazdakite movement as follows. Sometime in the course of the 5th century, presumably during or soon after the reign of Bahram V, Zardusht Khurragān, a mōbad or possibly a chief mōbad of Fasā, began a reform movement in the Zoroastrian religion; he claimed to offer a correct interpretation of the Avesta. It is also possible that, claiming to be an incarnation of an earlier leader, he only renewed and elaborated a movement begun previously by one Bundos, who had resided in Rome for a while and who had come under

[1] See Madelung, "Ismā'īliyya", p. 203, for some other Bāṭinī beliefs.

[2] The Druzes of Lebanon share many of the beliefs common to the Mazdakites and the Bāṭinīs; see Wesendonk, "Die Religion der Druzen", pp. 127ff.

[3] Madelung, *ibid.*, gives early 10th cent. as the date of its first appearance among the Bāṭinīs.

the influence of some gnostic religions there. The assigning of inner meanings to Zoroastrian scriptures early branded the followers of the movement as Zandīks.

Zardusht's interpretation of the Avesta disguised a set of beliefs, widely spread in late antiquity, which postulated a remote supreme deity and attributed the creation and management of the world to two demiurges. The forces which operated the universe were represented also in man, whose soul had a divine origin and longed to join the blissful world above. This reunion could be achieved through acquiring the redemptive knowledge which was entrusted to chosen and inspired leaders, regarded as incarnations of the divine, whose succession constituted an uninterrupted chain of revealed messages. The progress of this hierohistory was subject to cyclical renovations most probably based on the number seven. Men's souls received their reward and punishment in this world through appropriate reincarnation, until such time as, cleansed of the taint of darkness, they could join the world of light. On the ethical plane, the founder of Mazdakism was the apostle of a religion of peace and justice; he preached the removal of suffering among men, caused by the tempting demons of Darkness, by removing the causes of competition and strife and by sharing the available means and resources in a spirit of equality and brotherly love; he exhorted against the accumulation of property and women, and urged the restraining of selfish desires as a means of helping the release of souls from the admixture imposed upon them by the forces of Darkness.[1]

We do not know how the movement fared between its inception and the time of Kavād. We may assume that it continued to attract followers through quiet missionary work, which prefigured the Bāṭinī da'wa. During Pērōz's reign Iran was afflicted with a number of disasters, and when he was killed in 484, during a catastrophic war with the Hephthalites, Iran was facing formidable social, economic and political problems. The country had been weakened by successive wars and heavy taxation, and now was subjected to the humiliation of having to pay tribute to the Hephthalites, while territory was lost to the victors and much of the army destroyed.

About this time the leadership of the sect passed to Mazdak son of Bāmdād, a man of charisma and revolutionary temper,[2] deeply committed to the notion of social justice and the welfare of the poor. Under

[1] Cf. Shahristānī, p. 193.

[2] Cf. Tha'ālibī, p. 596.

his leadership the movement assumed a pronounced social colouring. Capitalizing on popular discontent, Mazdak questioned the enormous privileges of the noble classes and the clergy.[1] He not only envisaged an egalitarian society, but as a man of action also planned to carry out his communistic ideas. The peasants, the artisans and the "have-nots", in general, welcomed his teachings and flocked to his side. His movement was called that of "justice".[2] (However, he did not include the slaves in his scheme, else our sources would not have missed the point as grounds for further invectives against him; cf. below, p. 1024).

Whether any outside influence affected the formulation or the spread of the Mazdakite revolutionary attitude is hard to say; our sources are silent on the matter. E. J. Simcox entertained the possibility of some influences from China, on the basis of the similarity between a dialogue of the sage Mencius and the Emperor Hûi of Wei about 320 B.C., and the dialogue that we find in the *Shāh-nāma* between Mazdak and Kavād.[3] But this is no doubt too far-fetched, the relations with China having been rather tenuous. Far more to the point are the possible influences from the sect of Carpocratians, an eclectic, egalitarian sect which was founded in the 2nd century by the gnostic philosopher Carpocrates of Alexandria and continued as late as the 6th century. His followers venerated Zoroaster, Pythagoras and Plato among others, and "social justice" was central to their moral philosophy.[4] There are striking similarities between the Carpocratian and Mazdakite teachings; they both offered the same argument for the community of property and women, envisaged the same ideal society, and showed the same antinomian attitude towards religious laws.[5] We find again a parallel with Mazdakism in the Carpocratian belief in a remote supreme deity, unconcerned with the direction of the world, as well as in gnosis as the basis of salvation.[6] It is possible, therefore, that the Mazdakites borrowed some ideas from them either at the outset or in the course of their development.

Kavād, a capable and ambitious king, but also a man of liberal tendencies and with a passion for justice,[7] who resented the restricting

[1] See above, p. 999, and Pigulevskaja, pp. 213f.

[2] "'Adliyya" or the like in Islamic sources; see Ibn Miskawaih I, p. 168; Ibn al-Balkhī, p. 84; cf. Niẓam al-Mulk, p. 297.

[3] *Primitive Civilizations* II (London, 1894), pp. 128ff, *apud* Klima, *Mazdak*, pp. 206ff.

[4] See Liboron, pp. 16ff; and see Klima, *Mazdak*, pp. 209ff, for a relevant excerpt from Carpocratian writings.

[5] Liboron, pp. 25ff.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 20ff. Instead of demiurges, however, the Carpocratians believed in a number of angels.

[7] See 1021 n. 4 below.

power of the nobles and the Church, sided with Mazdak and accepted the movement's interpretation of the good religion. He promulgated a number of laws curtailing the privileges of the nobles and introducing unprecedented social reforms.[1] The king's support gave heart to the sectarians, and disturbances resulted from the Mazdakite mob attacking granaries,[2] storehouses, and the mansions of the affluent and their harems. The nobles reacted sharply and Kavād was deposed.

When Kavād returned to the throne with the help of the Hephthalites and the assistance of some of the nobles inclined to Mazdakism,[3] he had been somewhat sobered and acted more cautiously; but there is no reason to believe that he had undergone a drastic change of heart. His acceptance of Mazdakism must have been based on religious grounds,[4] as much as anything else, and he presumably continued in his faith, even though the Mazdakites' excesses drove him gradually to agree to their restriction and finally to their suppression.

Mazdak's end and the downfall and massacre of the Mazdakites have often been recounted with some element of fiction and fantasy. The Mazdakites were trying to ensure the succession of Kāvūs, the elder son of Kavād and a sympathizer, against Khusrau, Kavād's younger and favourite son.[5] Khusrau, who was supported by the Zoroastrian priesthood and anti-Mazdakite nobles, eventually persuaded the king to give in to his plans for putting down the sect. By this time the Mazdakite disruptions and possibly also Mazdakite mismanagement of common properties must have alienated many of their earlier supporters, and the desire for a return to law and order was probably spreading. Khusrau arranged for a typical religious debate in which the Mazdakite leader was foredoomed. Most sources mention a massacre of the Mazdakites in Ctesiphon, which apparently took place under Kavād in about 528 but was directed by Khusrau, who was now assuming *de*

[1] Procopius I, p. 5; Agathias IV, chap. 27, Firdausī, p. 57.

[2] Cf. Firdausī, p. 43; Pigulevskaja, pp. 210f.

[3] Bīrūnī (Fück, p. 79) says that a number of high aristocrats and princes had become Mazdakites. Among these must be counted Kavād's elder son, Kāvūs, and Siyāvash, who was appointed commander of the army after Kavād's return. See Nöldeke, *Ṭabari*, p. 145, n.1; cf. N. V. Pigulevskaja, "Mazdakitskoje dviženije", *Izvestija Akademii nauk SSSR*, serija istorii i filosofii IV (Moscow, 1944), p. 177, *apud* Klima, *Mazdak*, pp. 151, n. 30, 243, n.4.

[4] Ṭabarī I, p. 888, quotes from Hushām b. Muḥammad that "Kavād was a Zindīq (i.e., a Mazdakite); he manifested goodness and was reluctant to shed blood." Ḥamza, pp. 106ff, says that Kavād's kingdom came to an end because he was preoccupied with future life. Cf. Maqdisī III, p. 167, whose account derives from Ṭabarī, and cf. Procopius I. xi.

[5] According to Procopius I. xi, Kavād hated Kāvūs.

facto royal powers. The massacre must have been followed by a wave of persecutions in the provinces, repeated again at the beginning of Khusrau's reign. The sect lost much of its following and strength, particularly since Khusrau combined his suppression of the Mazdakites with far-reaching social, administrative, and fiscal reforms, carried out with an iron hand. The sect went underground, but survived, particularly outside urban centres.

With the Muslim conquest and the fall of the Sasanian state the Mazdakites resumed their activities. In the period of severe persecution under the late Sasanians the Mazdakites seem to have developed or refined a system of beliefs which we find later adopted also by the extremist Shīʿīs. To their chagrin the Mazdakites found that the Umayyads were no less repressive than the Sasanians. In order to escape the wrath of the caliphs, and to obtain exemption from the poll tax (*jizya*) they mostly passed themselves off as Muslims, but sided with the Shīʿīs, who as legitimists represented the political opposition and the revolutionary wing of Islam. Shiʿism, originally an Arab claim to legitimacy, gradually became a refuge of the oppressed classes, mostly mawālī, who brought with them a welter of new beliefs and ideas, inherited from the Iranian, Mesopotamian and Hellenistic past. In Iran, while the Zoroastrian landed gentry gradually adopted Sunnism and sided with the state, the Mazdakites embraced the revolutionary posture of the Kaisānī Shīʿīs and helped shape its doctrine. The Kaisānī sect and its many derivative factions embody practically the same doctrinal views and represent the same outlook and attitudes that we find among the Khurramīs on the one hand, and the early Bāṭinīs and Qarmaṭīs on the other. The testimony of our sources, as well as the near identity of Khurramī and Bāṭinī teachings, points to a Mazdakite line of development.

The fall of the Umayyads was largely the result of the Kaisānī daʿwa, which expressed the growing social and economic changes in the world of Islam.[1] The execution of Abū Muslim, whom the Neo-Mazdakites had held as their spiritual and political leader, proved a bitterly frustrating event, but none of the religio-political movements which sprang up in its aftermath succeeded in redressing the situation. The ʿAbbasids took hold and the Mazdakites were driven underground again or forced to assimilate themselves to some Shīʿī faction. By the time the movement of Bābak failed in 837, a new focus and a new direction had

[1] See Lewis, pp. 27ff, 32, for a discussion of these changes and the Shīʿī connection.

appeared in the Shīʿī world. The Kaisānīs, who with the installation of the ʿAbbasids had in fact lost their *raison d'être*, shifted their allegiance to the house of Ismāʿīl b. Jaʿfar, who with the help of some former Kaisānīs and probably some disguised Mazdakites, took up a revolutionary stand and replaced the line of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya as the torch-bearers of social protest and as representing the swollen ranks of the oppressed mawālī.[1] It was only natural that the Mazdakites, destined, as it seems, always to be protesting against social injustice and suffering the harshness of the ruling circles, should channel their thoughts and efforts into shaping and strengthening the Bāṭinī movement. When the Ismāʿīlīs succeeded in North Africa and turned conservative, the radical Bāṭinīs (Qarmaṭīs) broke with them and continued the hard line.

Of the social programme and economic doctrine of the Mazdakites in Islamic times our sources generally say very little, as noted earlier. However, we seem to get a glimpse of the social order inspired by the Mazdakite ideals in two reports. One, preserved in Nuwairī's *Nihāyat al-Arab*, is by Ibn Rizām (10th cent.), a hostile source, who describes village colonies in the neighbourhood of Kūfa, founded by Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ in the 9th century. According to Ibn Rizām, Ḥamdān, "having converted the inhabitants of some Iraqi villages to his doctrine . . ., imposed upon them *ulfa* (union), which consisted of collecting all their property in one place in order to enjoy it in common. The *dāʿīs* chose in each village a trustworthy man, who was to receive all that the inhabitants of the village had by way of cattle, jewellery, furniture, etc. In return this manager supplied clothes to the naked, and satisfied all the other needs of the people, so that there were no longer any poor people among the sectaries. Everyone worked with diligence and emulation, in order to deserve high rank by the benefit he brought to the community. . . . When this institution was well established Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ ordered the dāʿīs to collect all the women one night, so that they might mix indiscriminately with all the men. For this, he said, was the perfection and the last degree of friendship and brotherhood."[2] When Masʿūdī mentions[3] a village near Rayy exclusively inhabited by the Mazdakites, we may envisage a similar community, and assume that such communities had been set up by the Mazdakites under Kavād. Interestingly enough Nuwairī states[4] that when Ḥamdān

[1] Cf. Lewis, p. 24.

[2] Taken from Lewis, pp. 97ff; cf. de Goeje, *Mémoire*, pp. 27ff; see Sylvestre de Sacy, *Druzes*, CLXXXV ff for more detail.

[3] *Murūj* III, p. 27.

[4] De Sacy, *op. cit.*, CXCI.

had completely assured himself of the village community's obedience, then he presented to them the arguments taken from "the dualists". Obviously only Mazdakites could have been meant.

The other report is the well known description of Laḥsā by Nāṣir-i Khusrau, the Ismā'īlī propagandist, poet, and traveller, who visited the city in 1049. According to him[1] the city was ruled by a council of six members, all disciples[2] of the former ruler Abū Sa'īd (al-Jannābī), in a spirit of equity and justice. The citizens did not pay any taxes. If anyone became impoverished or incurred debt, he was helped until he became solvent. Anyone who owed money was asked to repay only the capital. If a foreign artisan came into Laḥsā, the state would lend him money to establish himself. If anyone's land or property suffered damage the state would help to restore it free of charge. There were mills which ground grain for the citizens without charge. As currency they used baskets of lead tokens; when a transaction took place, the required number of baskets was exchanged; no one would take the tokens out of the baskets. The people of Laḥsā called themselves not Muslims but "Abū Sa'īdīs", Abū Sa'īd having called them away from Islam and to himself as the *marja'*. He had said that he would return. The rulers were to ensure that no dispute would occur among the citizens until his return. Even though the community admitted the prophethood of Muḥammad there were no mosques, no prayers, no *khuṭbas* and no Friday services. However, they would not prevent anyone who wished to say prayers. There was only one mosque, built at private cost by a Persian for the orthodox pilgrims. They never drank wine. The city had 20,000 men capable of bearing arms, and had 30,000 negro slaves for agricultural work. Animals of all kinds were eaten at Laḥsā. It should be noted that Baḥrain and Hajar had been provinces of the Persian empire in Sasanian time and the population of the coastal areas had been largely Persian and Jewish.[3]

Thus we find that the Mazdakite ideas and precepts, far from dying out with Khusrau's stern measures, continued to live on in the Islamic period – no doubt with changes dictated by new circumstances – among the Khurramīs and Qarmaṭīs and the kindred movements associated with them.

[1] *Safar-nāma* (Berlin, 1922), pp. 123ff.

[2] Lit. "children". As Lewis, pp. 44ff, 99, n. 5, points out, spiritual descendants are meant.

[3] See de Goeje, *Mémoire*, p. 36.

PART VII

ART HISTORY

Little is known of genuine Iranian art in the Seleucid period, when the Greeks and Macedonians practised their own brand of art. With the rise of the Parthians a new artistic style began to emerge, which is neither Greek nor Achaemenian, but incorporates features of both. In time it produced a new artistic tradition, which is particularly noticeable, to the extent that surviving monuments allow, in the western provinces of the Parthian empire.

The Sasanians, with their strong sense of mission and pronounced nationalism, seized upon art, especially rock sculpture, as a means of political and ideological propaganda and made effective use of it in this direction. Their art affected many neighbouring regions and served later as one of the constituent elements of Islamic art.

Chapter 28 deals with Parthian art and attempts to bring into focus the characteristics of this art which set it so conspicuously apart from that of the preceding age. The arts of the Sasanians, monumental and minor, form the subject of Chapter 29; Sasanian silver, in view of its importance and its instancing a unique development among Sasanian arts, has been examined in a separate section. Chapter 30 is devoted to the artistic developments in Transoxiana (Khwārazm, Sogdiana and Bactria) within the context of the progress of civilization in these regions. The art of the Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Scythian kingdoms and the Kushān empire is discussed in Chapters 5, 26 and 28.

Chapters 6, 13, 17, 22 and 28 also throw appreciable light on the arts of eastern Iran and Central Asia. Editor.

CHAPTER 28

PARTHIAN ART

* Daniel Schlumberger died on 21 October 1972. The present essay, drafted in 1965–6 was left unfinished. The Editor wisely decided, nevertheless, to publish the manuscript since the ideas expressed, which reflect the author's years of preoccupation with the cross cultural influences in the arts of the Near East, are both a summation of facts known and an inspiration for future research.

The task of selecting and supplying the illustrations for the article was assigned to me. Daniel Schlumberger had put a few photographs aside which he intended to use and which Raoul Curiel sent me upon my request for help. Similarly helpful and generous responses came from the following scholars who have contributed photographs: Michael Bates, A. D. H Bivar, Walter Hinz, K. Jeppesen, Margaret Thompson, Louis Vanden Berghe, Nancy Waggoner. Where original photographs were not obtainable illustrations have had to be reproduced from the book-plates of previous publications. Permission to use this material has been granted by the authors and publishers of the works concerned and is gratefully acknowledged.

Mrs Dahlia Tawil helped generously with the research for the illustrations and their selection; Dr. Trudy Kawami helped with the procurement of the photographs; she also compiled the bibliography and provided some additional notes. I hope that the combined activities of many persons, honouring the memory of Daniel Schlumberger, will make it easier for the reader to follow the ideas expressed in this essay.

Of the literature which has been published in the field since 1966, the reports on Ai Khanum in note 4 on page 1032 have been brought up to date and mention of Roman Ghirshman's preliminary reports on his excavations at Masjid-i Sulaimān has been added in a note, for Daniel Schlumberger was certainly aware of the important discoveries of reliefs and sculpture made at that site after he had written the draft of his article. Added also to note 7 on page 1043 was a mention of the article by Henri Seyrig, "Sur un bas-relief de Tang-i Sarvak", *Syria* XLVII (1970). In the text of the present essay Daniel Schlumberger expressed doubts as to the interpretation of the reliefs which W. B. Henning had suggested in 1952. In 1972 he surely knew Seyrig's article and would not have wanted his own to appear without a reference to the brilliant insight of his great friend. EDITH PORADA (Columbia University).

The Macedonian conquest of the Orient (334–323 B.C.) suddenly turned Achaemenian Iran into hellenized Iran. For a better understanding of the effects of this change on the arts, it seems necessary briefly to look back on what Achaemenian art had been. In the 6th century B.C., with the Achaemenians achieving for the first time the political unity of the civilized countries of the Ancient Near East, the arts of this area had reached the last stage of their development. At Pasargadae under Cyrus, at Susa and Persepolis under Darius, great palaces had been raised, whose architecture and decoration reflected and blended the various national traditions of the conquered countries: of Mesopotamia, of Egypt, of Anatolia, and even of the Asiatic Greeks.

The purpose of these great sovereigns had been to provide adequate

seats for the "universal", supranational power which Ahura Mazda had granted them. In spite of their architects heavily borrowing from foreign arts, the palaces may be said to be original creations by the peculiar way in which these foreign elements are associated and combined together into a harmonious and new synthesis. It might be suggested that just as the Achaemenian sovereign assumed the new position of a "King of kings", Achaemenian art was conceived as an "Art of arts", drawing, by deliberate choice, from the national arts of the Orient, some techniques, architectural forms, figurative or ornamental motifs, and rejecting no less deliberately other techniques, forms and motifs, which, although traditional in these arts, were not found convenient – an art, in short, "superior" to those national arts by reason of a resolute purpose of borrowing from each only "the best". In other words, the predominant characteristic of that art was its eclecticism. It was consciously aiming at an ideal of final perfection by means of selection; and, feeling this ideal to have been attained, it stuck to it for the two centuries that it lasted.

Achaemenian art is contemporary with classical Greek art. Whereas at Susa and Persepolis traditions sometimes going back two and a half millennia into the past result in this ultimate effort towards perfection which freezes them into immutability – at that very time, on the banks of the Aegean Sea, there developed an art interested in movement and life, always in quest of progress, never satisfied with the results achieved and engaged in a constant effort to outdo itself. This surprising situation suddenly comes to an end with the conquest of Alexander. The Macedonians become masters of the Orient, naturally bringing with themselves the living art, the "modern" art of the time, in other words, Greek art. The results have been described by the great German archaeologist E. Herzfeld in the following words: "There is no deeper caesura in the 5,000 years of history of the Ancient East than the conquest of Alexander the Great, and there is no archaeological object produced after this time that does not bear his stamp."[1]

The long period of nearly a thousand years introduced by the Macedonian conquest and ending with the Muslim conquest, may be divided into two great periods: the first, lasting five and a half centuries (330 B.C.–A.D. 225), is the hellenized period of Iran; the second, lasting over four centuries (A.D. 225–642), sees the birth and the growth of a new national art, the art of Sasanian Iran.

[1] *Iran in the Ancient East*, p. 305.

THE ARTS OF HELLENIZED IRAN

The Macedonian period of Iran was relatively short. But, let it be stressed, we cannot consider the disappearance of Seleucid rule in the west and of Bactrian rule in the east, nor the assumption of power by the Iranian horsemen from the steppes – Parthians in the west, Sakas and Kushāns in the east – as marking the end of the hellenized period of the history of Iran.

In the west, the whole time of Parthian rule is, we feel, to be included in that period. For art, however peculiar its development, and however imperfectly we know it, clearly remains, until the end, dependent on the novelties introduced by Hellenism.

In the east, we do not know what happened to the Greek cities and the Greek tongue, and it is generally conceded that they did not survive the Saka invasions. Even if this is the case, which is far from certain, Kanishka's art, as we know it now at Surkh Kotal, and "Graeco-Buddhist" art, its offspring, clearly show that, between the Oxus and the Indus, Hellenism remains an essential component of civilization throughout the time of the invasions, and at least until the end of the period of political stability corresponding to the second Kushān dynasty.

All through this long and obscure period, in the west as well as in the east, the art of the coins is the only one whose development we can follow, thanks to an abundant and almost continuous series of documents. For the period of Macedonian rule the testimony of coins is particularly precious. The issues of the Seleucids in their Iranian territories are well classified today, and most of their mints are identified.[1] The coins of the Bactrian kings present more difficulties; the order of succession, even the number of sovereigns, still remain controversial and the attribution of the different coins to particular mints entirely conjectural.[2] But at least one point leaves no doubt: the coins of the Seleucids and those of the independent sovereigns of Bactria are purely Greek. Some of the portraits of the Bactrian kings, on large coins, even deserve to be counted among the masterpieces of Greek art in general.

[1] See E. T. Newell, *The Coinage of the Eastern Seleucid Mints* (New York, 1938).

[2] See R. B. Whitehead, *Catalogue of the Coins in the Punjab Museum, Lahore* I (1914). Recent discussions on the problems in W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1951); A. K. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks* (Oxford, 1957); R. Curiel and G. Fussman, *Le Trésor Monétaire du Qunduz* (MDAFA xx, 1965). See also chap. 5.

For post-Macedonian times, the classification of the coins of the Arsacid Parthians in the west,[1] and of the Parthian, Saka and Kushān dynasties in the east,[2] is far from being settled and raises many minor problems. But the main features of their evolution are none the less clear.

By their fabric, their types and their style, the first Arsacid coinages continue the Seleucid pattern with at most a few adaptations, the main one being that the most frequently met of reverse types, the Seleucid Apollo, seated on the omphalos and holding an arrow, becomes a Parthian warrior (the king?), holding his bow. As early as the end of the 2nd century B.C., a growing tendency to schematize the different types is noticeable. The outlines become rougher, the features plainer, the Greek letters in the legends become less sharp, or grow thicker. Nevertheless, until the very end of the dynasty, Parthian coinage preserves both its Greek reverse types and its legends in Greek, though legends in Parthian may be added in the 2nd century A.D. on certain kinds of coins. Thus Parthian coinages remain to the end in the line of their Greek origin. Only they become stereotyped, and their Greek legends become faulty: they are "barbarized" Greek coins.

In the east, in spite of serious difficulties in the classificatinn of the so-called "Indo-Scythian" and "Indo-Parthian" coins, all of them bilingual (Greek on the obverse, Kharoshṭhī on the reverse) a similar development can be traced. As early as Maues' (Moga's) reign, believed to be the first of the Indo-Scythians, we notice among mostly Greek obverse types a few new, un-Greek types, such as the mounted king in armour, holding a lance or a whip, or the king sitting cross-legged on cushions. These types are again to be found on the numerous coins of Azes and Azilises, the mounted king being the most common; they are also found on the Indo-Parthian coins, specially on Gundophares' coins. Under Azes faulty Greek legends begin to appear, and they become common under Gundophares. Finally we have the Kushāns, whose first coins associate the image and the name of the last Bactrian king Hermaios (on the obverse, with Greek legend) with the image and name of Kujula Kadphises (on the reverse, with Kharoshṭhī legend). The bilingual coins last until Kanishka. Under this king great changes take place. The bilingual issues come to an end. For a short time, on the

[1] Wroth, *BMC Parthia*; Sellwood, *An Introduction to the Coinage of Parthia*; see chap. 8(*a*) and bibliography.

[2] Whitehead, *op. cit.*; and for the Kushāns, R. Göbl in F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, *Finanzgeschichte der Spätantike* (Frankfurt a. M., 1957), pp. 171–256. See also chaps 5 and 6.

reverse of Kanishka's coins, we have Greek divinities, the legends on both obverse and reverse being in Greek only.[1] But soon the Greek legends disappear; both foreign languages have been dropped, to be replaced by the local, Iranian idiom, "Bactrian" as we may call it,[2] written in Greek characters. Kanishka's plentiful issues now show a great number of new divinities, bearing mostly Iranian, sometimes Indian names. The types[3] however are still, to a large extent, of Greek origin, with some of them apparently borrowed from the contemporary Graeco-Roman world.

The most interesting feature of the coins is that they allow us to follow step by step the development and changes of Greek influence, first introduced by Alexander's conquest, and then, after some further contacts with the Mediterranean, slowly disappearing (pls. 49, 50).

In all other fields of art the documents we have are scattered over wide areas, and mostly ill-dated, which means that we are unable to compare them usefully with the coins, or between themselves. These documents we must now examine, first considering the arts of Iran under Macedonian and Greek rulers, and next what became of these arts after they had come to serve new masters.

ART UNDER THE GREEK RULERS

We entirely agree with Herzfeld's judgment quoted above about the profound change brought about by Alexander's conquest in the history of the Ancient East. Yet it must be confessed that, except for the coins, it is not an easy task fully to grasp that change in relation to Iranian art.

With the monuments of the Achaemenians, that is with the last monuments of the Ancient Orient, we should like to compare the monuments of the Macedonians, that is the first monuments of the new Greek Orient. But, paradoxically, while we possess Achaemenian monuments of the first rank, extraordinarily well preserved, such as the façades of the royal tombs, the relief at Bīsutūn, and above all the many reliefs at Persepolis, we still cannot find, on Iranian soil, one ruin, one work of art, that may safely be said to belong to the time of Alexander or of the Diadochi, and we are able to mention only a few fragments of Seleucid and Bactrian architecture. To turn from Achaemenian Iran to Macedonian Iran is to leave a world of stable and

[1] On this change, see Wroth, *op. cit.*, p. lxvii.

[2] On this denomination, see W. B. Henning, "The Bactrian inscription", *BSOAS* XXIII (1960), p. 47.

[3] Göbl, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

well-defined forms for a world deeply shaken by a revolution, the effects of which only become dimly apparent to us two or three centuries later, in the arts of the post-Macedonian period.

Let it first be said that from the purely Greek character of the coins of the Macedonian kings it would be unsafe to deduce that architecture, sculpture and painting, in the countries ruled by these sovereigns, were purely Greek too. There is no doubt that these arts flourished in Iran, under the Macedonian masters; Greek cities existed from Media and Persis to Bactria and "White India", and they must have had the kind of official buildings, whether sacred (temples) or secular (an agora, gymnasia), that necessarily belonged to a Greek city: they surely had their residential districts, and outside the walls, their cemeteries; and palaces for the Seleucid viceroys or satraps, and for the Bactrian kings, must have existed. But of all that, almost nothing has been found.

The sites of some of those cities have been identified, such as Laodicea in Media (Nihāvand)[1] and Seleucia on the Eulaios (which is Greek Susa).[2] Excavations undertaken in that last city have yielded a few objects, but no architecture. If we except Persepolis, two recently discovered sites alone throw a feeble light on Graeco-Macedonian architecture in Iranian countries. The first of these is Ikaros, a Greek establishment discovered and excavated by a Danish mission at Failaka, a small island in the Persian Gulf.[3] The excavators have supposed that its foundation might go back to Alexander; but the only approximately dated objects to be found, an inscription reproducing a letter from a Seleucid king, and a hoard of coins, are dated from the second half of the 3rd century B.C. The most noteworthy monument is a small temple (fig. 1, pl. 51*a*), *in antis*, Greek in its plan as well as in its architectural decoration (Ionic capitals, acroteria adorned with palmettes), but nevertheless showing column bases with falling leaves, clearly in the Achaemenian tradition (pl. 51*b*).

The second site, nowadays named Ai Khanum, has only been known since 1964 and the excavations have just begun (pl. 52*a*).[4] It is a city of

[1] L. Robert, "Inscriptions séleucides", *Hellenica* VII (1949), p. 19.

[2] Le Rider, *Suse*, p. 280.

[3] Jeppesen, "A Hellenistic Fortress", p. 541, with bibliography, p. 544.

[4] See *CRAI* 1965, 7–9, 36–46; 1966, 127–33; D. Schlumberger and P. Bernard, "Ai Khanoum", *BCH* LXXXIX (1965), 590–657; *CRAI* 1970, pp. 301–49; P. Bernard, "Ai Khanoum", *Supplement* 1970. *Enciclopedia dell' Arte Antica* (Rome, 1973), pp. 21–4; and P. Leriche, "Ai Khanoum. Un rempart hellénistique en Asie Centrale", *Revue Archéologique* (Paris, 1974), 2, pp. 231–70. For a summarizing article see P. Bernard, "Chapitaux corinthiens hellénistiques découverts á Ai Khanoum", *Syria* XLV (1968), pp. 111–51.

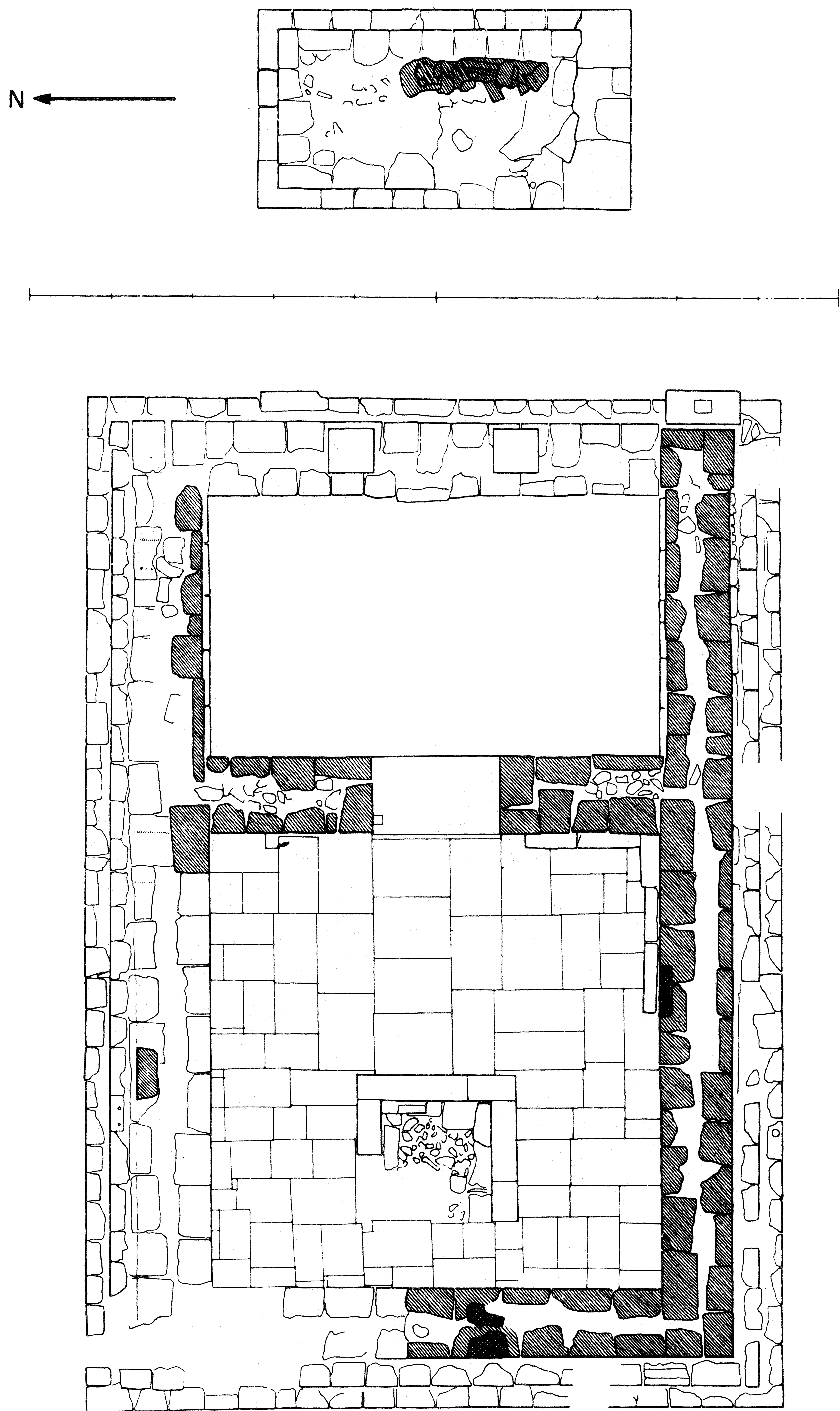


Fig. 1. Failaka. Plan of temple.



Fig. 2. Ai Khanum. Plan of city.

eastern Bactria at the meeting point of the Oxus and one of its main tributaries, the Kokcha, in the province of Ṭāliqān (northern Afghanistan). The Greek name of that city, the date of its foundation, are still unknown. Its destruction is supposed to be due to the Saka invasion, traditionally dated about 130 B.C.; the site was never reoccupied. The town, surrounded by strong walls, consists of an acropolis and a lower town. The main features of the layout are discernible (fig. 2). In the

lower town, in particular, the trace of a street starting from the northern gateway and nearly 1,700 m. long, clearly forms the main axis of the city. The outlines of several public monuments of large size and of squares and courtyards in between are also apparent. A propylaeum giving access to one of those yards has been excavated (pl. 52*b*). The excavation of other monuments, whose nature still remains uncertain, is in progress.

Mud bricks are the main constituent of this architecture; but baked bricks and ashlar are also in use. Baked bricks formed the lower courses of some walls, and were also used in arches, remains of which have been found. The columns, pilasters, the door sills were of stone, their blocks being connected by bronze dowels sealed off with lead. One of the monuments now in course of excavation had an entrance-hall of 18 stone columns in three rows of six.

The forms of the architectural decoration in stone (capitals, bases) are Greek, and, on the whole, very much like the forms in use in Greece and Anatolia at the same period (pl. 53*a*, *b*). But it is worth mentioning that the bases of the Corinthian columns of the Propylaeum are thick round tori of Achaemenian type, like those of the "Treasury" at Persepolis, for instance (pl. 53*c*).

To the fragmentary information provided by the ruins of Ikaros and by the still anonymous city whose excavation has just started on the Oxus, we feel tempted to add information derived from other remains: various architectural fragments at Stakhr, in Persis (pl. 54); two columns still standing at Khurkha, in Media, probably belonging to a temple (pl 55); the temple of Kangāvar, also in Media, a very important building whose ruins are mainly known from the accounts of 19th century travellers (pl. 56), and have suffered much since;[1] the temple of Jandial at Taxila (North-West India) whose architectural decoration is conspicuous for its hight quality (fig. 3). But neither the attribution to the Seleucids of the Stakhr fragments and of the two temples in Media, nor the attribution to the Bactrians of the temple at Taxila, are beyond question; for all these monuments, a later date could be considered.[2]

Figurative sculpture of the Macedonian period has been found so far

[1] For Stakhr, Khurkha and Kangāvar, see Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 276–86.

[2] For Jandial, Sir John Marshall, the excavator, rather favours a Saka date, see Marshall, *Taxila* I (Cambridge, 1951), p. 225. For a Sasanian date of the Stakhr remains see P. Bernard, "Les Chapiteaux corinthiens d'Istakhr", *JA* (1974), pp. 284–8 and p. 297. For the Khurha structure see K. Schippmann, *Die iranischen Feuerheiligtümer* (Berlin, 1971), pp. 424–30; and W. Kleiss, "Qal'eh Zohak in Azerbaidjan", *AMI* VI (1973), pp. 173–82.

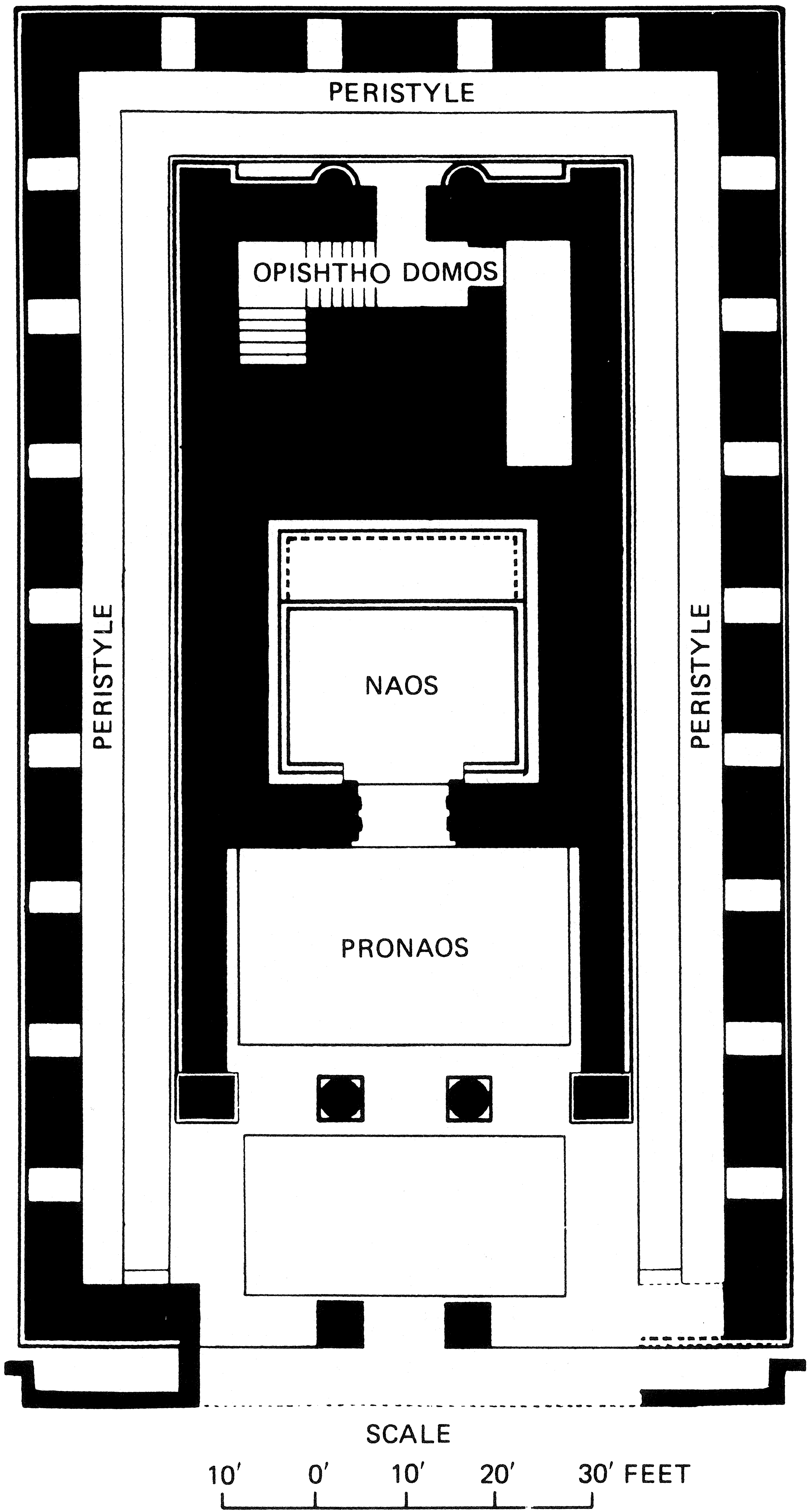


Fig. 3. Taxila. Plan of the Jandial temple.

only on a very few sites. From Tal-i Zohak (Fārs) comes a small marble head probably representing Aphrodite (pl. 57);[1] from the Bakhtiyārī mountains a marble torso of a woman (pl. 58).[2] Both are of Greek style, as is also the battered stone lion at Hamadān.[3]

At Persepolis, in a fire-temple of the Seleucid period, found by Herzfeld,[4] two figures, in bas-relief, are preserved on door jambs (pl. 59). They are mediocre works that have nothing to do with Greek art, and but poorly reflect Achaemenian tradition.

At Bīsutūn, a rock sculpture, dated by an inscription of 149–8 B.C.,[5] shows Herakles resting, with his weapons hanging from the branches of a tree (pl. 60). The Bīsutūn Herakles is the *interpretatio graeca* of an Iranian divinity, mentioned by Tacitus, in a text shown by Herzfeld[6] to refer to that place before the relief was known – an interpretation now confirmed by its discovery. The work is of a very provincial style, but its iconography is Greek.

At Ai Khanum, finally, a fine herm was found in 1966 (pl. 61). It is a pure product of Greek art.[7]

Of wall paintings, which cannot fail to have existed, we can say nothing: they are lost to us.

Of the minor arts little is known: some small bronzes (pl. 62), and some pieces of pottery[8] adorned with palmettes are of Greek style.

ART AFTER THE GREEK RULERS

From the Iranian dynasties that succeeded the Seleucids and the Bactrians, we have again but a very small number of monuments; and again they are widely scattered, and of uncertain date.

For the early Parthian period, if we except the ruins or architectural remains of uncertain date mentioned above, we have one site only: Nisā, in Parthyene (now Turkmenistan).[9]

Nisā, the original capital of the Parthians, and an archaeological site of considerable importance, has been actively explored by Soviet

[1] A. Stein, "An archaeological tour in the ancient Persis", *Iraq* III (1936), p. 140, pl. XXIX, 33.

[2] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 28.

[3] H. Luschey, "Der Löwe von Ekbatana", *AMI* I (1968), pp. 115–22.

[4] Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 286; Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 26, fig. 34.

[5] L. Robert, in *Gnomon* XXXV (1963), p. 76.

[6] Tacitus, *Abnnals* XII.13; see Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*, p. 46.

[7] P. Bernard, "Deuxième campagne de fouilles d'Ai Khanoum", *CRAI* 1967, pp. 319–21 and figs. 10 and 11.

[8] Schlumberger and Bernard, *BCH* LXXXIX (1965), p. 620, figs. 12–14.

[9] See G. A. Paguchenkova, *TITAKE* I (1949), II (1951), VI (1958). The discoveries at Nisā are discussed by Gullini, pp. 306–19.

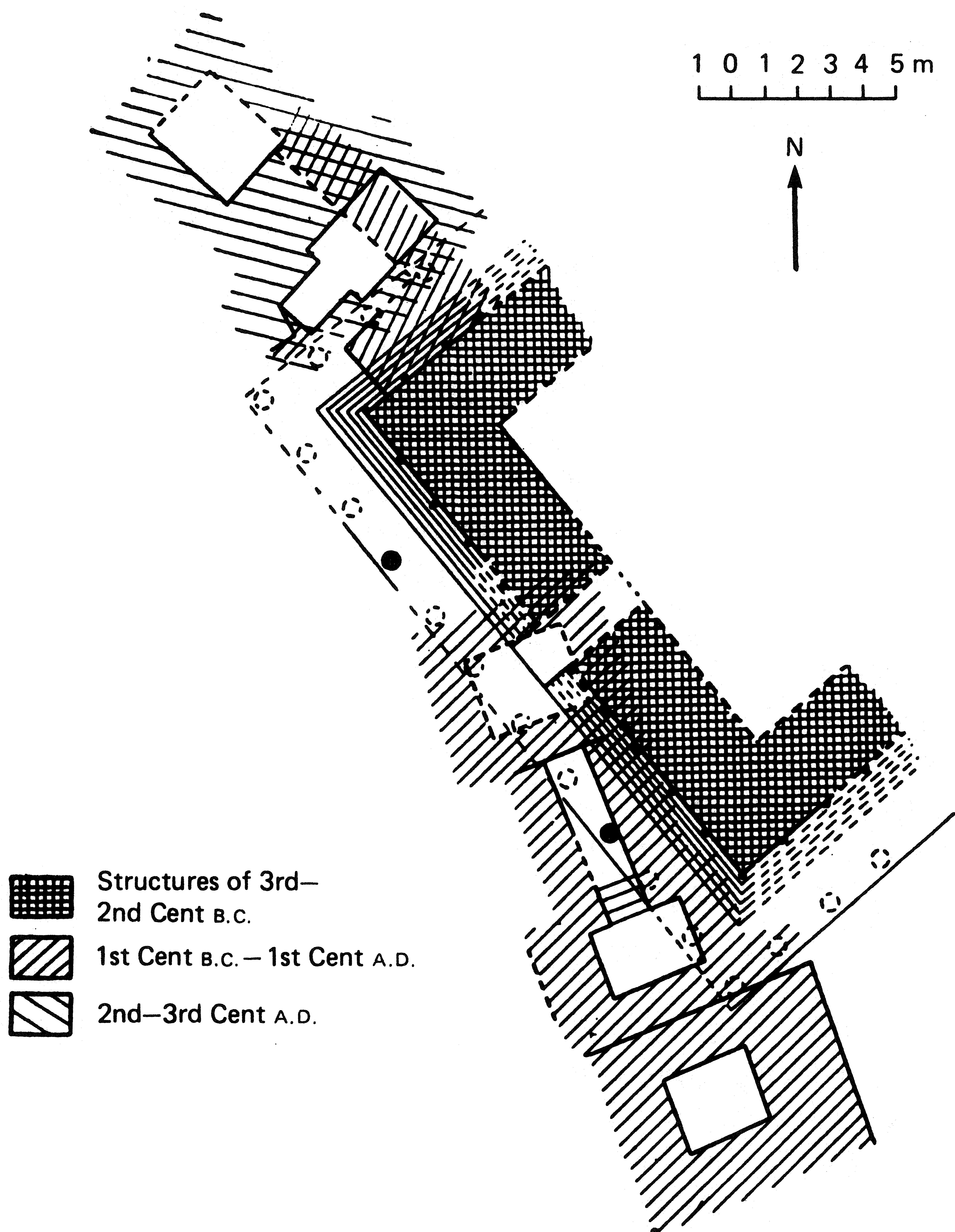


Fig. 4. New Nisa. Plan of the temple-complex.

archaeologists. Two large settlements, both walled in, are to be seen, which have been called Novaia Nisa (the "New Nisā") and Staraia Nisa (the "Old Nisā"), in spite of their being contemporary. "New Nisā" is the city proper, "Old Nisā" is the royal fortress.

At the foot of the walls of the "New Nisā", the excavators have found a "temple" and a necropolis. In the "Old Nisā" they have found a "Southern complex" held to be a palace, with a "Round temple", a "Tower temple" and a "Square hall" as main monuments; and a

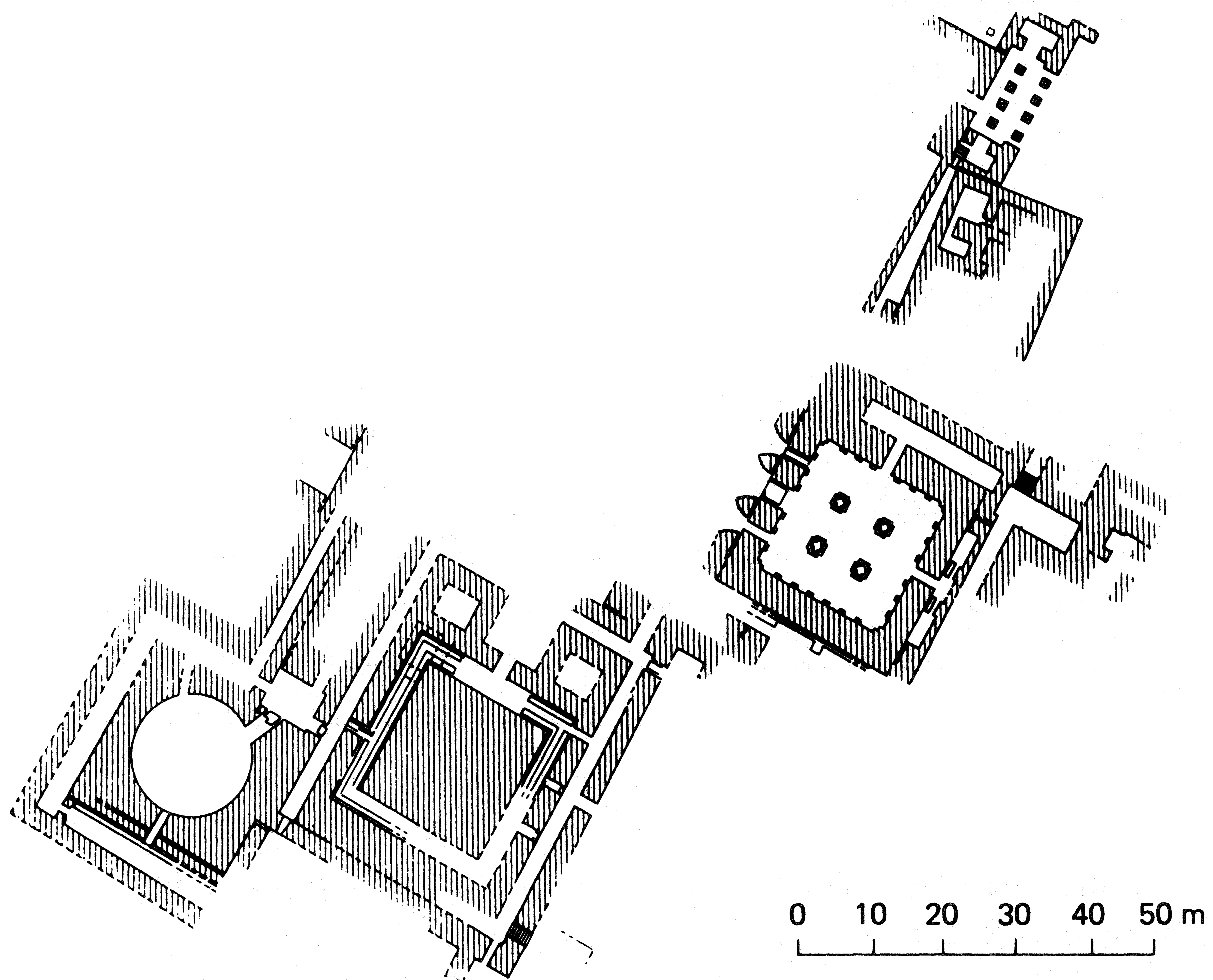


Fig. 5. Old Nisa. "Temple tower" and "Round temple".

"Northern complex", with a "Square house" as main monument, plus some dependencies used for storing wine jars.

Of these buildings the upper parts and roofings can be restored only by conjecture; and their very nature mostly remains a problem. At "New Nisā", the "temple" (fig. 4) – of very early date (3rd–2nd century B.C.) as shown by the existence of tombs of the end of the 1st century B.C. in the layer above – could itself be a tomb, as has been suggested by G. Gullini.[1] In the "Southern complex" of the royal fortress ("Old Nisā"), the nature of the "Square hall", considered an audience hall by the excavators, the purpose of the "Temple tower" and of the "Round temple" (fig. 5), and their suggested connections with fire worship and ancestor worship, remain uncertain. In the "Northern complex" of the same fortress, the original plan of the "Square house" and the changes this plan later underwent, were clearly revealed by the excavations, and the finds show that this building

[1] Gullini, p. 308.

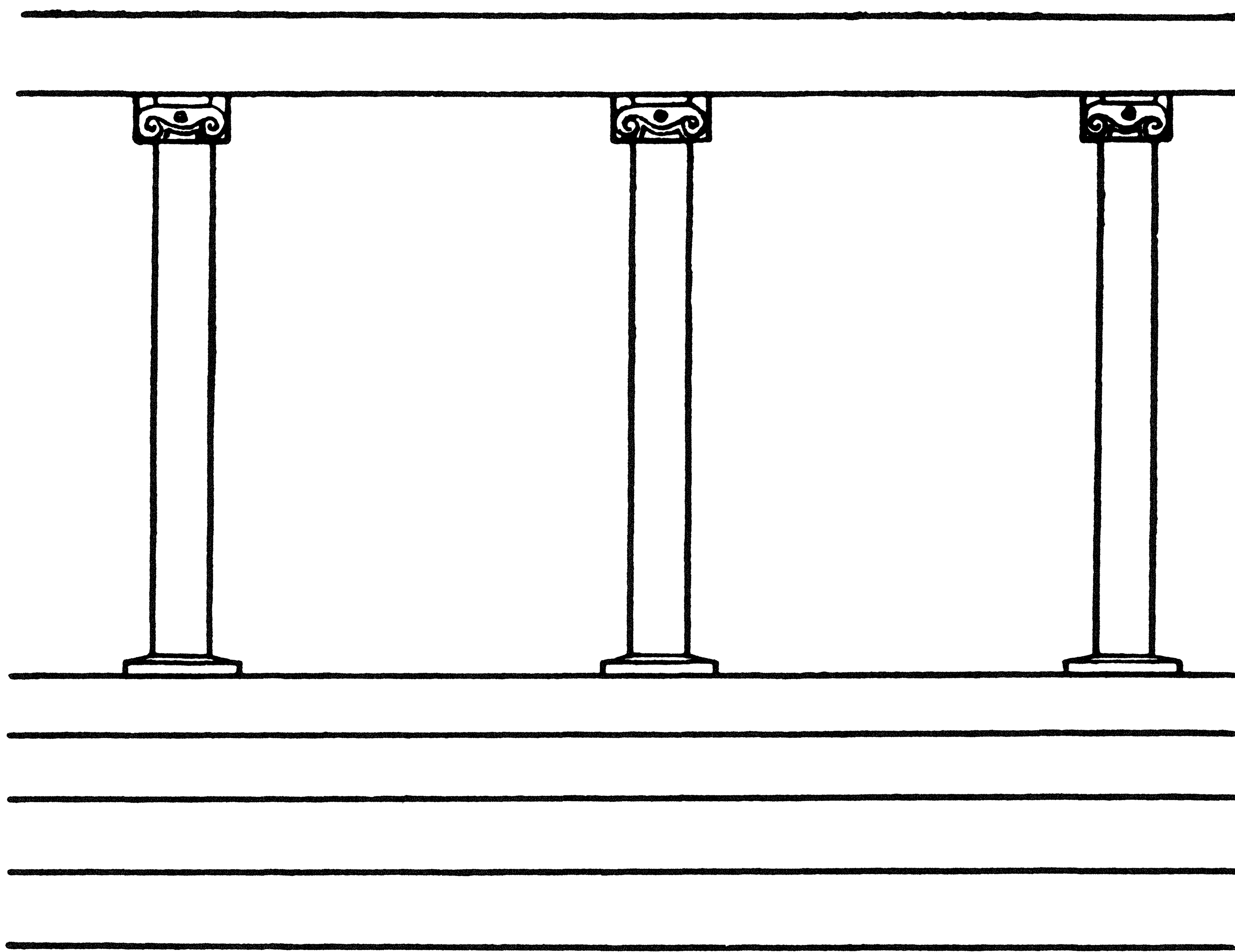


Fig. 6. Nisa. Façade of temple with Ionic columns.

was ultimately used as a storehouse for precious objects. But its original purpose is still a problem.

While the nature of these great ruins remains unexplained, something can be said of their style, as revealed by their architectural ornament, fragments of which are preserved, most of them in terracotta. As a whole this ornament is borrowed from Greek art. This is particularly apparent at "New Nisā" in the Ionic capitals of the "temple" (fig. 6);[1] at "Old Nisā" in acanthus leaves[2] which, with their ringed stalks, are very similar to the acanthus of the Ai Khanum stone capitals; and in pseudo-doric "metopes".[3] And the little that remains of the terracotta figures[4] which adorned the "Square hall" points in the same direction: they were figures draped in the Greek fashion.

However, to these forms of Greek origin, can be added a few forms derived from Achaemenian tradition, such as stepped battlements, and, at the "Square house", stone bases consisting of a heavy torus over a square plinth,[5] closely akin to those of the Propylaeum at Ai Khanum, or the Treasury at Persepolis (see above, p. 1035).

But the most important of all the discoveries made at Nisā was a

[1] Pugachenkova, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 63.
[2] Pugachenkova, *op. cit.* VI, p. 101.
[3] Pugachenkova, *op. cit.* VI, pp. 83, 87, 96, 102.
[4] Pugachenkova, *op. cit.* VI, pp. 91–2.
[5] Pugachenkova, *op. cit.* VI, pp. 71, 77.

hoard of ivory objects[1] dated 2nd century B.C. by the excavators, among which should be mentioned, first and foremost, about forty large-size drinking horns, skilfully rescued and restored by the Soviet archaeologists (pl. 63). Belonging by their very nature to a definite class of oriental vessels, well-known in Achaemenian art, and with their extremities very frequently shaped like winged monsters, these extraordinary objects are an ancient Oriental heritage. But their reliefs are Greek, both in their themes and in their style; and some traces of a foreign touch, as for instance the ornamental use made of human heads, do not alter that fundamental fact. Also, the few sculptures excavated at Nisā are purely Greek.

In brief, the great interest of the finds made at Nisā is that they give us what the coinage of the first Parthian kings gives us too: samples of Greek art as it flourished at the court of non-Greek princes.

Apart from Nisā, the most noteworthy remains may be listed as follows: in the west, at the "Gates of Asia" to use Herzfeld's expression (that is the old route from Babylonia to Iran), some rock-sculptures; in the south-west, a few finds from Susa, and a number of sites and sculptures from Elymais; in the east, a large site in Sīstān, the Kūh-i Khwāja, and two of the Oxus sites, Khalchayan and Surkh Kotal.

Of the rock-sculptures at the "Gates ofAsia", one lies at Sar-i Pul, at the opening of the Zagros, three others at Bīsutūn near Kirmānshāh, in Media. The relief at Sar-i Pul[2] shows a scene of investiture or homage. The reliefs at Bīsutūn show: the first, four noblemen paying homage to Mithridates II (fig. 7); the second, fighting horsemen; the third, an offering (of incense?) made on a fire-altar by a man (pl. 64). The first two reliefs bear inscriptions.[3] In the scene of homage (now partly destroyed), Mithridates II is merely called "Great King", which, as Herzfeld observed, proves this relief to be earlier than 110 B.C., when this sovereign assumed the title of "Great King of Kings".[4] In the second, one of the horsemen is called Gotarzes; Herzfeld considers him to be Gotarzes II (middle of the 1st century A.D.). The third relief remains undated.[5]

[1] E. M. Masson and G. A. Pugachenkova, *TITAKE* IV (1956–59). For extensive photographs of the rhyta see *idem*, *Ritony Nisy* (Ashkabad, 1959).

[2] Herzfeld, *Tor von Asien*, p. 53, and Gerd Gropp, "Die parthische Inscrift von Sar Pol-e Zohab", *ZDMG* CXVIII (1968), pp. 315–19.

[3] Herzfeld, *Tor von Asien*, pp. 35–53, and *Iran in the Ancient East*, p. 287.

[4] For new observations on the relief and its inscription see Colledge, *Parthian Art* p. 90, and review by T. S. Kawami in *The Art Bulletin* LXI (New York, 1979), pp. 471–3

[5] Herzfeld, *Tor von Asien*, p. 56, and *Iran in the Ancient East*, p. 289; Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 53, fig. 66. Good photograph in *National Geographic Magazine*, Dec. 1950, p. 842. For a

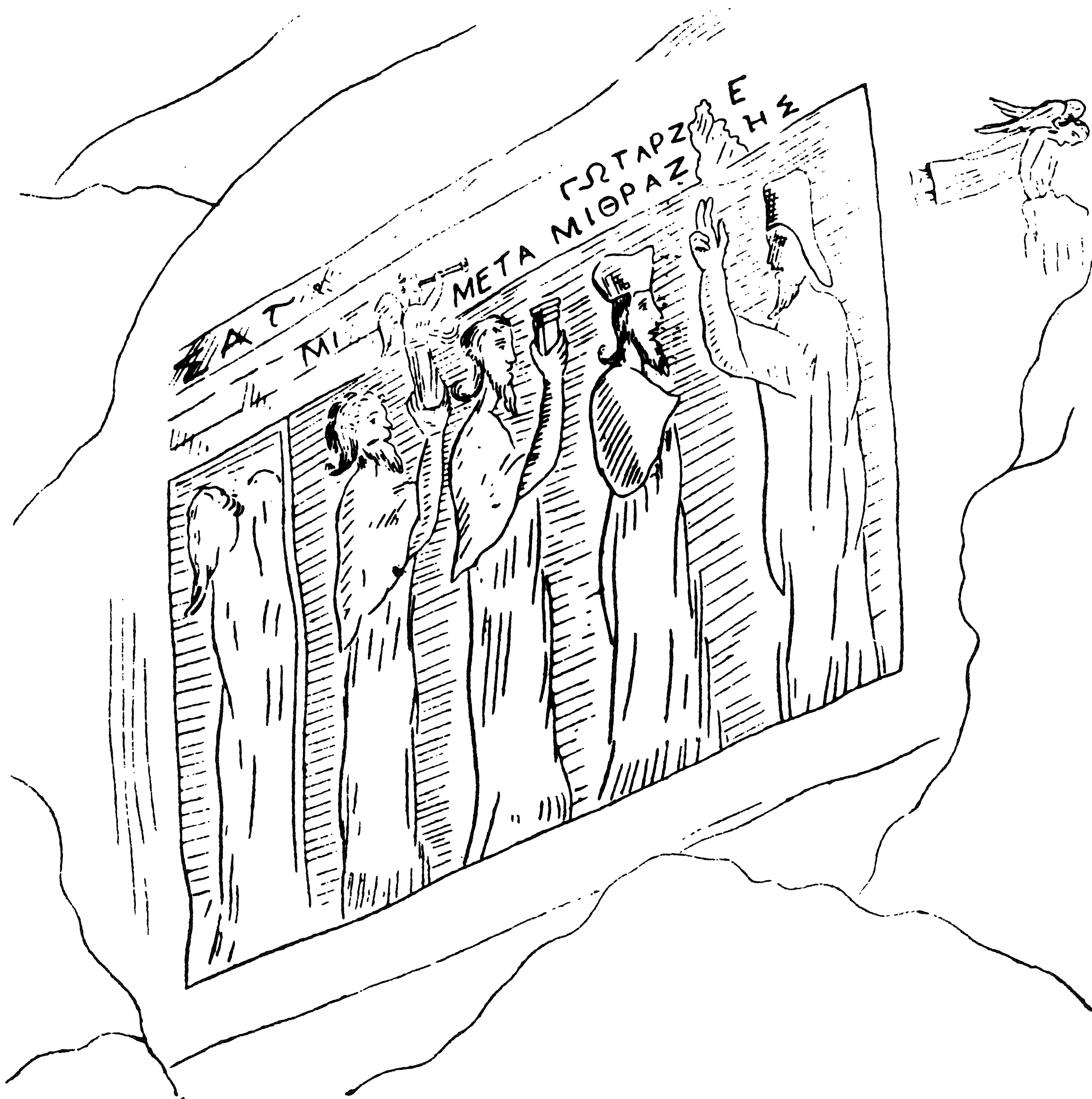


Fig. 7. Bīsitūn. Relief of Mithridates II (after Grelot).

At Susa, sculptures once existed, as shown by a number of inscriptions and a few fragments of the sculptures themselves: a woman's head in marble, wearing a turreted crown, believed to represent a Parthian queen (pl. 65);[1] a bearded man's head in limestone (pl. 66);[2] a stele representing a satrap being invested by the king, dated A.D. 215 (pl. 67).[3]

In Elymais, we may mention two terraces at Masjid-i Sulaimān and Bard-i Nishāndeh; the ruins at Shāmī; a number of rock-sculptures. The terraces at Masjid-i Sulaimān[4] and Bard-i Nishāndeh[5] are artificial

discussion of the area see W. Kleiss, "Zur Topographie des 'Partherhanges' in Bisutun", *AMI* III (1970), pp. 33–168; and for the newly discovered inscription see G. Gropp, "Eine Reise in West- und Südiran", *AMI* III (1970), pp. 200 ff.

[1] F. Cumont, "Portrait d'une reine parthe trouvé á Suse", *CRAI* 1939, pp. 330–40; Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 96, fig. 107B. [2] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 109.

[3] R. Ghirshman, "Un bas-relief d'Artaban V", *MMP* XLIV (1950), pp. 97–107, and *Iran*, p. 56, fig. 70.

[4] R. Ghirshman, "Masjid-i Solaiman", *CRAI* 1968, pp. 8–15; 1969, pp. 482–94; 1972, pp. 30–40; *idem*, "Le terrasse sacrée de Masjid-i Solaiman", *Iran* IX (1971), pp. 173–4; *idem*, "Terrasse sacrée de Masjid-i Solaiman", *AAnt ASH* XIX (1971), pp. 255–8, figs. 1–51.

[5] R. Ghirshman, "Bard-è Nechandeh", *Syria* XLI (1964), pp. 301–21; XLII (1965), pp. 289–310; *idem*, "Bard-è Nechandeh", *AArch ASH* XVI (1964), pp. 241–5; XIX (1967),

platforms, framed by strong retaining walls, accessible by stairways and carrying some ruined structures. Although they have sometimes been believed to go back to the Achaemenian period, we consider both of them to be Parthian. At Bard-i Nishāndeh, moreover, excavations have now yielded sculptures whose Parthian date is unanimously admitted (pl. 68). Not far from there, at Shāmī[1] in the mountains around Mālamīr, a full-sized and very well preserved bronze statue of a Parthian king or grandee (pl. 69) was discovered by chance, in 1934,[2] among ruins which are likely to be those of a temple; and, with this statue, fragments of others, both bronze and stone.

In the same country are to be seen a number of rock-sculptures. One of them, at Khung-i Naurūzī (pl. 70)[3] (or Khung-i Aždar) depicts four men paying homage to a king on horseback, likely to be Mithradates I (171–138 B.C.). Others exist at Bīd Zard,[4] where the subject is not clear, and at Khung-i Yār-ʿAlīvand, Khung-i Kamālvand (pl. 71),[5] Shīmbār (pl. 72),[6] also apparently representing scenes of homage. They can be dated only very approximately, to the 1st and 2nd century A.D.

Still in the mountains of Elymais but further south, are the important rock-sculptures of Tang-i Sarvak,[7] with inscriptions, belonging to the second half of the 2nd century A.D. They represent various scenes including a king worshipping a sacred stone (pl. 73) (Henning: monument ANW); a king reclining on a couch and holding a diadem (ANa) (pl. 74*a*), a king apparently being invested by a god (BN); a fight on horseback (D), a king on horseback slaying a lion (?) (AWb) (pl. 74*b*), a man strangling a lion (AWc), two worshippers before a fire altar (BS). Henning proposed a tentative interpretation of these

pp. 3–14; *idem*, *CRAI* 1965, pp. 379–82; *idem*, *Terrasses sacrées de Bard-è Néchandeh et Masjid-i Solaiman*, 2 vols (Paris, 1976; Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse 46).

1 A. Stein, *Old Routes of Western Iran* (London, 1940), pp. 141–159; A. Godard, *The Art of Iran* (London, 1965), pp. 153–9.

2 A. Godard, "Les statues parthes de Shamī", *Āthār-é Irān* II (Haarlem, 1937), pp. 285–305; H. Seyrig, "Antiquités syriennes 26. La grande statue Parthe de Shami", *Syria* XX (1939), pp. 177–83; Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 88, fig. 99.

3 L. Vanden Berghe, "Le relief parthe de Ḫung-i Naurūzī", *IA* III (1963), pp. 154–68, and de Waele, "La sculpture rupestre d'Élymaide", pp. 59–66, especially p. 61, note 2, and pp. 72–5.

4 Vanden Berghe, *op. cit.* p. 167. The stone has since disappeared. See de Waele, *op. cit.* p. 75, note 3.

5 W. Hinz, "Zwei neuentdeckte parthische Felsreliefs", *IA* III (1963), pp. 169–73.

6 Vanden Berghe, *op. cit.* p. 163, note 1, A. D. H. Bivar and S. Shaked, "The inscriptions at Shīmbār", *BSOAS* XXVII (1964), pp. 265–90.

7 Henning, "The Monuments and Inscriptions of Tang-i Sarvak"; Ghirshman, *Iran*, figs. 67–69; de Waele, "Nouvelle introduction aux relief rupestres de Tang-e Sarvak"; and *idem*, "La sculpture rupestre d'Élymaide", pp. 67–79; H. Seyrig, "Antiquités syriennes 90. Sur un bas-relief de Tang-i Sarvak", *Syria* XLVII (1970), pp. 113–16.

sculptures, believing their main theme to be "the investiture of a king or several kings". While this may be the case, it should be stressed that Henning's explanation cannot be considered sure. The meaning of a number of scenes remains uncertain, the problem of the link which may or may not exist between the different scenes is open to discussion, and many details have still to be explained.

In Persian Sīstān, at Kūh-i Khwāja,[1] on a mountain top a palace is preserved, mainly of the Parthian period, but with a number of Sasanian additions. An important set of mural paintings[2] has been discovered there by Herzfeld, behind some of the Sasanian walls. Both palace and paintings can only be dated approximately (Herzfeld: 1st century A.D. ?). Panels of carved stucco, forming a revetment, and also considered of Parthian date by Herzfeld, complete the decoration.[3]

At Khalchayan, in Tajikistan, in the Surkhān Daryā valley, one of the northern tributaries of the Oxus, a small one-storied palace has been discovered, whose main hall has yielded remains of mural paintings and of clay sculptures, fallen from the walls (p. 75).[4] This building, whose roof was adorned with crow-stepped battlements and antefixes of terracotta, is considered by the excavators to go back to the 1st century B.C.

At Surkh Kotal, in Kataghan (Afghanistan), in the valley of the Kunduz-āb, one of the southern tributaries of the Oxus, a large sanctuary has been cleared (fig. 8).[5] This sacred precinct comprises a temple surrounded by a courtyard with colonnaded porticoes, on the top of a hill. There are four large terraces on the hill's eastern slope, with a monumental stairway leading up to the top and connecting terrace to terrace. The architectural decoration was partly of stone; we have Corinthian pilasters from the podium of the temple, column bases from the peristyle of the temple and the porticoes around the courtyard, fragments of crow-stepped battlements (pl. 76*a*) whose original location could not be ascertained. Moreover, the sanctuary was

[1] On the site, and excavations there, see Gullini, *passim*.

[2] Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East*, pp. 291–97, pls. CI–CIV. Ghirshman, *Iran*, figs. 55–58. For additional paintings as well as fragmentary stucco reliefs see M. Aurel Stein, *Innermost Asia* II (Oxford, 1928), pp. 912–14 and III, plan 54.

[3] Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, pl. XCIX; Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 54.

[4] G. A. Pugachenkova, *Khalchayan* (Tashkent, 1966) (in Russian), and "La sculpture de Khaltchayan", *IA* V (1965), pp. 116–27.

[5] Preliminary reports in Schlumberger, "Le temple de Surkh Kotal en Bactriane I", *JA* 1952, pp. 433–53; "II", 1954, pp. 161–205; "III", 1955, pp. 269–79; "IV", 1964, pp. 303–26. See also Schlumberger, "Surkh Kotal".

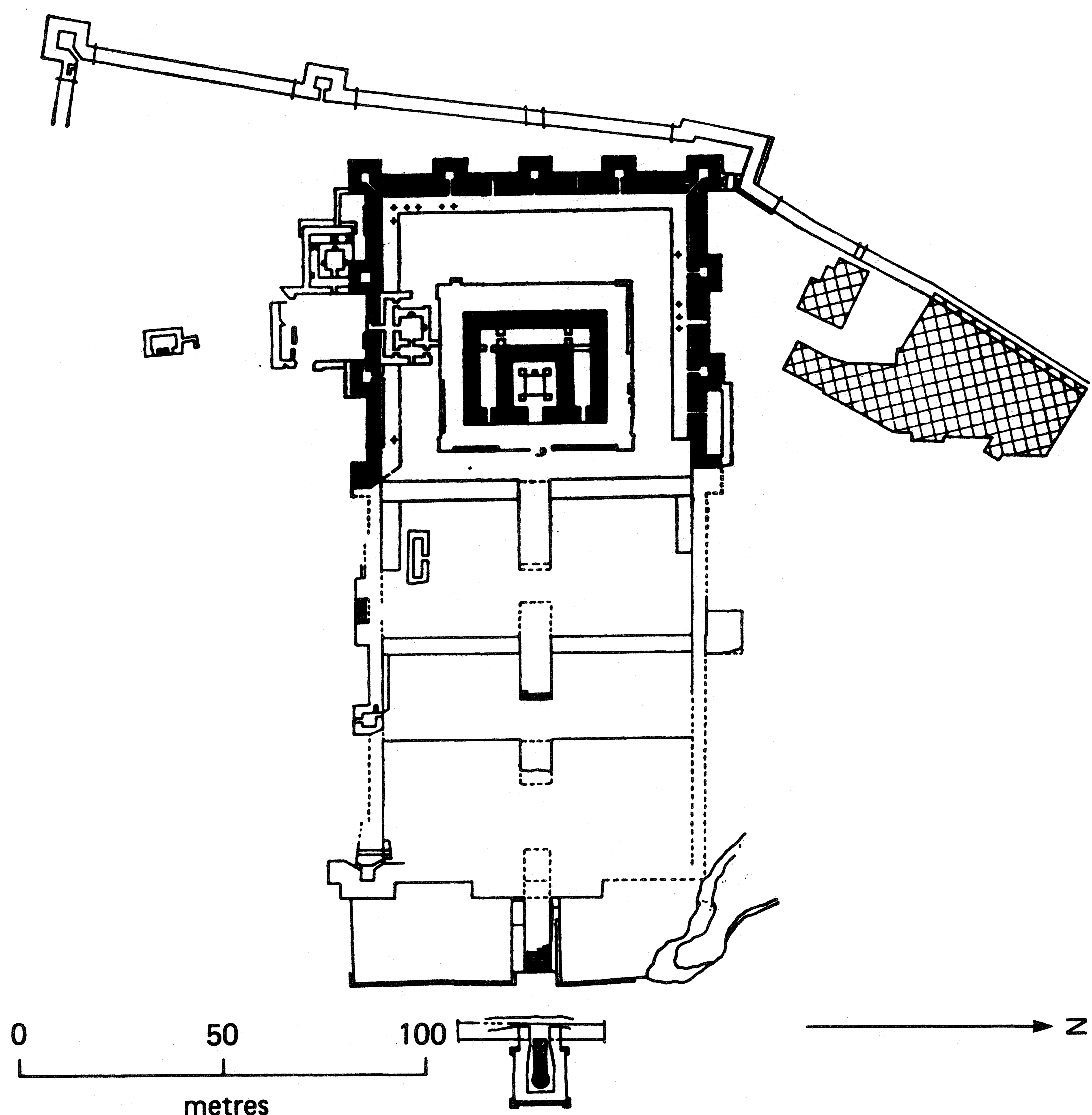


Fig. 8. Surkh Kotal, plan of sanctuary.

adorned with sculptures both of clay and of stone (pl. 76*b*). The sculptures in clay, with vivid touches of colour, adorned a number of niches around the courtyard, but only a few small fragments have escaped destruction. The sculpture in stone consisted of three statues, that have come down to us in fragments, and of a high relief (pl. 77). The sanctuary was founded by Kanishka, and must therefore be dated at the earliest, to the last decades of the 1st century A.D., more probably to the 2nd century.

This brief survey shows the wide gaps still existing in our knowledge.

Of Arsacid architecture we know only the beginnings, and this from but one site, Nisā, and from structures whose nature we are still unable to define.

In Persia, proper, Arsacid architecture is still entirely missing. Susa

has produced no buildings, and the imposing terraces at Masjid-i Sulaimān and Bard-i Nishāndeh did not carry structures of importance; they seem to have mainly been used for ceremonies in the open.[1]

In the east, the three sites of Kūh-i Khwāja, of Khalchayan, and Surkh Kotal, although far from being dated precisely, may be considered samples of the architecture of late Parthian times, Surkh Kotal being apparently the latest of the three. The lavish tombs recently discovered in Northern Afghanistan raise the hope that a more precise dating may be possible.[2]

Parthian statuary is known in the west from the two heads at Susa, and from a single complete piece, the statue of Shāmī, the precise date of which still remains a matter of controversy; in the east from the three defaced statues at Surkh Kotal.

Of Parthian sculpture in relief we have samples in the West only: the two groups of rock-sculptures listed above, the fragments at Bard-i Nishāndeh the stele from Susa: with the exception of the reliefs at Khung-i Naurūzī, and at Bīsutūn, all of them are late. Moreover they are mostly in bad condition, and of very poor quality. Of the sculpture in clay and of mural paintings, which appear to have played an important part in the decoration of temples and palaces, very little is left: of wall paintings we have only morsels at Khalchayan; and but as few defaced pictures at Kūh-i Khwāja, known through Herzfeld's copies, for the originals are now lost (pl. 78).

Of minor arts almost nothing is left,[3] except coins.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARTS IN HELLENIZED IRAN: A TENTATIVE OUTLINE

The gaps in our knowledge are such that any attempt to trace the evolution of the arts during the hellenizing period of Iranian civilization may appear premature. Although fully aware of the provisional character of such an attempt, let us try to draw out the main lines of that picture.

[1] Subsequent excavations have revealed structures on the terrace at Masjid-i Sulaimān; see Ghirshman, *Terrasses sacrées*, chap. VI, pp. 103–32, and pls. LVIII–LXIX.

[2] See "A Tomb with Gold to Rival Tut's", *Life*, July, 1979, pp.65-8; and "The Golden Nobles of Shibarghan", *Time*, July 2, 1979, pp. 52ff.

[3] Terra-cotta figurines of horsemen, not certainly from Persia (Herzfeld, *Tor von Asien*, p. 34, pl. XX), and fragments of a stone vase with satyrs' heads (Herzfeld, *op. cit.* p. 33, pl. XIX, and Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 21–2; considered by these authors to belong to the Greek, period), may be quoted here.

Of Greek art, as it existed in Iran under Macedonian domination,we have samples of very high quality in the Seleucid and Bactrian coins. But except for numismatics, the characters of that period still remain, as we have seen, almost unknown. One basic problem which cannot be solved for certain must be mentioned at the outset: did Achaemenian art disappear, transmitting nothing of itself to its successor, and was it replaced by an imported art, which developed according to its own resources in adapting itself to its environments? Or did Greek art, at the start, take root in its new home only by compromising with its predecessor, by borrowing from it a number of traditional motifs and techniques? In other words, was the art of the Seleucid and Bactrian kings in the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. purely Greek, as is the case with the coins; or was it Greek art modified to a certain extent by a survival of Achaemenian art?

It seems that indications of such a survival can be found in the architectural fragments of Stakhr, in the column bases of Achaemenian type at Khurkha, at Ai Khanum and at Ikaros-Failaka. Moreover this would appear consistent with the fact we observe in the arts of the neighbouring states; at the court of the Mauryas in India as early as the middle of the 3rd century B.C., at the court of the Arsacids in Nisā a little later, Persepolitan forms mingle with Hellenistic forms.

The finds made in Nisā provide a link between the Greek and the Parthian period. For although we may feel tempted to consider these finds with the second period, they belong to the first chronologically, and also, it seems, in character. We may expect future excavations to show that the art of Nisā was only slightly different from the art that still flourished in the Greek cities of Persia, as well as in those of the Bactrian kingdom.

This view is based mainly on the architectural fragments and on the rhytons. For the buildings, the very nature of which remains mostly uncertain, it has yet to be confirmed. In this connection, could not the "Square house" at Nisā be a palestra? Its plan in its first period[1] is reminiscent of some Greek palestras, like that of Epidaurus[2] for instance; the altar[3] is exactly what can be expected there; and the existence of a palestra at the court of Nisā, would in no way be surprising at a period when the new-born Parthian state still had (in

[1] Pugachenkova, *TITAKE* VI, p. 76.
[2] J. Delorme, *Gymnasion* (Paris, 1960), pl. x, fig. 19.
[3] Pugachenkova, *op. cit.* VI, p. 75.

Persia and Bactria) powerful Graeco-Macedonian neighbours, whose customs it was naturally inclined to imitate.

Let it be stressed that the view here proposed of art in Iran from Alexander's conquest to about the middle of the 2nd century B.C. should be considered but a suggestion. Our knowledge of that art – whether we find it serving the Greeks or already serving the Parthians – is still so imperfect that any definite judgment would be premature. Secure conclusions will become possible only after further progress of the excavations at Ai Khanum, Nisā, and similar sites.

In the second half of the 2nd century B.C., in Persia as well as on the Oxus, probably somewhat later in the Kabul valley and the Indus valley, Greek domination came to an end. This great political change could not fail to react on art, which necessarily had to adapt itself to tastes and needs of the new masters for whom alone by now it was meant. Thus was born a truly Graeco-Iranian art, linking its predominantly Greek elements and, if we are right, Achaemenian survivals, with Neo-Iranian elements now appearing, both in iconography and style. In the west, the relief at Khung-i Naurūzī, the Gotarzes relief with fighting horsemen at Bīsutūn, the statue of Shāmī, and in the east the paintings of Kūh-i Khwāja, the sculpture of Khalchayan, the statues of Surkh Kotal, seem to us typical instances of that development.

However, we must acknowledge that until now we have but few samples of that kind of art in the Iranian countries themselves. But here we may perhaps be allowed to refer to monuments outside the geographical and linguistic limits of these countries. In fact, the rule of the new dynasties, both in the west and in the east, spread largely beyond these limits. In the west they encroached upon the Anatolian and the Semitic world: the Parthians ruled over Mesopotamia, and even established their capital there; while eastern Anatolia had Iranian masters. In the east they encroached on the Indian world, in the 2nd century A.D. as far as the Ganges valley.

Until recently, it is true, the monuments in the west, being appreciated according to Mediterranean standards, were considered as only marginal, and somewhat adulterated products of Graeco-Roman art; and those in the east are mostly thought of, even today, as belonging to Indian art. For our part however, we believe the monuments of Iran proper to be inseparable from those of the vast outside world under Iranian rule; and that the hellenized art of the Iranian kings, and of the towns directly or indirectly under their rule, forms an indivisible unity.

In the west, the art that flourished at the courts of Pontus, Cappadocia and Armenia, is still unknown; but the great monuments, altogether cultic and funerary, of the dynasty of Commagene,[1] may rightly be called Graeco-Iranian, just as the earliest monuments of the Parthian layers at Assur.[2]

In the east, the same can be said of some of the finds at Taxila; and in the 2nd century A.D., of the statues of the Kushan kings at Mathurā (pl. 79).[3] For although usually attributed to Indian art, these statues seem to us entirely devoid of Indian character; they are but importations into India of the contemporary art of Bactria, as we know it now from Surkh Kotal.

In that Graeco-Iranian world one province, Mesopotamia, seems to have taken the lead. For here it is that a number of novelties first make their appearance, at some time in the 1st century A.D.

In architecture the great innovation is the *aivān*, an audience hall with a new plan, roofed, either, as at Assur, with terraces carried by arches (pl. 80),[4] or as at Hatra,[5] with barrel vaults. Now while the arch and the vault had been known for a long time in the east, and barrel vaults had been used, particularly in Achaemenian architecture, to cover underground structures or minor rooms, yet they had never been used so far to cover large rooms. The change now occurring from trabeated to arcuated architecture, the systematic use of the latter even for rooms of very large span (15 m. at Hatra) quite obviously is a fact of the utmost importance: in other words, the sudden appearance, in Parthian architecture, of aivān, with the mighty opening of its arch, amounts, both technically and esthetically, to a revolution.[6]

In architectural decoration the innovation is that façades, though adorned with tiers of superposed Greek orders, show un-Greek proportions and an un-Greek use of sculptured stucco panels.

In sculpture and in painting, the foremost novelty is "Parthian frontality".

Among those novelties the extension of the use of vaulting is often

[1] K. Humann and O. Puchstein, *Reise in Kleinasien und Nord-Syrien* (Berlin, 1890), pp. 97–372; F. K. Dörner and T. Goell, *Arsameia am Nymphaios* (Istanbuler Forschungen, 23, Berlin, 1963); Ghirshman, *Iran*, pp. 57–67, figs. 71–80. See also Ch. 3.

[2] W. Andrae and H. Lenzen, *Die Partherstadt Assur* (*WVDOG* LVII, 1933).

[3] J. Ph. Vogel, "Sculpture de Mathurā", *Artibus Asiae* XV (1930), pls. I–IV, and J. M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Art of the Kushans* (Berkeley, Calif., 1967).

[4] Andrae and Lenzen, *Partherstadt Assur*.

[5] Andrae, *Hatra* II [see bibliography, Ch. 11 under Hatra].

[6] For recent evidence of this creative development see Keall, "Some Thoughts on the Early Eyvan".

considered as borrowed from the Roman world. This may be so, but remains to be confirmed. And in any case, the aivān, the neglect of Greek proportions, the use of carved stucco revetment, are surely not of Mediterranean origin. Some scholars believe the aivān and stucco decoration to have originated in eastern Iran. Recent discoveries, in Soviet Turkestan and Afghanistan, do not favour this view. Therefore, provided future discoveries do not prove the contrary, we shall consider these novelties to have begun in Parthian Mesopotamia.

Finally, we believe Parthian Mesopotamia also to be the place of origin of what we are now accustomed to call "Parthian art". When M. Rostovtzeff first tried to determine what the arts in the countries under Parthian sway could have been,[1] he had, of course, the whole Parthian field in mind, chronologically as well as topographically. But as the great majority of known documents are from the western part of that field (Hatra, Dura-Europos, even Palmyra, outside its political boundaries) and are late (1st, 2nd and even 3rd centuries A.D.), Rostovtzeff's very meritorious attempt actually resulted in a definition of what should be called "Syro-Mesopotamian art of the late Parthian period" as contrasted with the art of Mediterranean Syria in the same period (i.e. "Graeco-Roman" art). The essential characteristics of Parthian art, thus understood, Rostovtzeff considered to be frontality, spirituality, hieratism, linearity, verism.[2] Now spirituality is, it seems to us, mainly an effect of frontality; hieratism, linearity, verism, are but legacies from ancient eastern arts. Alone the use made of frontality by "Parthian art" is entirely foreign to these, as well as to Greek art. This "Parthian frontality" therefore we must now try to define.

It is true that the habit of showing full face, in relief and in painting (a number of figures such as the Hero Gilgamesh, the Naked Goddess, the Lion fighting the Bull) is as old as Mesopotamian art itself. By this kind of frontal representation, the quality of "living presence", normally embodied in statues, is being introduced into relief and painting. But, let it be stressed, these figures remain but a very small group of well-defined exceptions, the rule being, from the earliest beginnings of eastern art, for figures to be shown in strict profile. And this rule remains unchanged throughout the history of the ancient east, down to the end of the Achaemenian period.

[1] M. I. Rostovtzeff, "Dura and the Problem of Parthian Art", *YCS* v (1935), pp. 155–304.

[2] Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.* pp. 236 ff.; discussion of Rostovtzeff's views in D. Schlumberger "Descendants non-méditteranéens de l'art grec", *Syria* xxxvii (1960), especially pp. 253 ff.

It was for Greek art to teach freedom to the east in these matters: Greek art where figures are shown in every attitude, face-view, side-view, even back-view, and in every kind of intermediate posture. "Parthian frontality", as we are now accustomed to call it, deeply differs both from ancient Near Eastern and from Greek frontality, though it is, no doubt, an offspring of the latter. For both in Oriental art and in Greek art, frontality was an exceptional treatment: in Oriental art it was a treatment strictly reserved for a small number of traditional characters of cult and myth; in Greek art it was an option resorted to only for definite reasons, when demanded by the subject, and, on the whole, seldom made use of. With Parthian art, on the contrary, frontality becomes the normal treatment of the figure. For the Parthians frontality is really nothing but the habit of showing, in relief and in painting, all figures full-face, even at the expense (as it seems to us moderns) of clearness and intelligibility. So systematic is this use that it amounts to a complete banishment *de facto* of the side-view and of all intermediate attitudes. This singular state of things seems to have become established in the course of the 1st century A.D. In Mesopotamia we observe it at Hatra. In inner Syria, the art of which is inseparable from that of Mesopotamia, we observe it at Dura-Europos and Palmyra, represented by hundreds of monuments. At Bīsutūn – now to turn to Iran proper – Parthian frontality does not yet appear on the rock-relief of Gotarzes, about the middle of the 1st century A.D., but the relief of the man offering incense (unfortunately undated) is a good instance of it. With the later rock-reliefs it is the rule, the most notable instances being the reliefs at Tang-i Sarvak.

Such is, in outline, the world of "Parthian art", as M. Rostovtzeff first called it, that is of the art of an original genre which developed in the last two centuries of the Arsacid dynasty. Its heart was at Ctesiphon, the Parthian capital.

Herzfeld, judging the art of the Parthian epoch from the monuments he knew on Iranian soil, denied it any merit, and denounced its "pathetically low level",[1] which in fact is a deserved estimation of most of these monuments. But were the statues, reliefs, stucco-revetments and wall paintings of Ctesiphon and Seleucia still extant, we might have to revise this judgement, as the better products of Hatrene and Palmyrene sculpture, and of Durene painting, and, in Iran itself, the statue of Shāmī, already invite us to do. All these works are nowadays considered

[1] Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East*, p. 305.

to offer us a reflection of the lost arts of the Parthian capital, and may incline us to believe that the art of Iran, in the two first centuries A.D. should not be appreciated only from the rough masonry at Masjid-i Sulaimān and Bard-i Nishāndeh, or from clumsy rock-reliefs, whose rusticity could be due to their remote location.

Mesopotamian innovations seem to have spread to the east late and to a limited extent only. Though the art of building arches and vaults was known both in the ancient Near East and in Greece, though fragments of brick arches are now being excavated at Ai Khanum, though arches of the Parthian period are being found at Kūh-i Khwāja and at Khalchayan, we have no indication of the systematic use of vaulting in monumental architecture in the distant eastern provinces, before Sasanian times. Under Kanishka the sanctuary at Surkh Kotal was covered with terraces, and any signs of an arch or vault having existed in that great monument are completely absent. Nor were any remains of stucco-revetment found there. Thus the fine stucco panel discovered by Herzfeld at Kūh-i Khwāja remains, if correctly dated to the Parthian epoch, entirely isolated.

Of sculpture and painting at the eastern Iranian courts, down to the end of Kanishka's dynasty we know very little indeed, and only from documents of doubtful date: the paintings at Kūh-i Khwāja, the statues at Surkh Kotal (and Mathurā), the fragments of clay sculpture at Khalchayan. But considering the paintings at Kūh-i Khwāja on the one hand, and the but limited measure of Parthian influence revealed by the later, Graeco-Buddhist, development on the other, we have again no reason to believe Parthian novelties to have gained the ascendancy.

In short, everything seems to show Greek tradition in Bactria to have been more deeply rooted, and to have survived later than in Persia, with the result that, at a time when Parthian art had already developed in the west, "Graeco-Iranian" art lived on in the east. In the west the development ended, in Persia, and most probably in Mesopotamia as well, by the supersession of Parthian art by something new and very different, Sasanian art. As will be shown hereafter the change in art is a direct consequence of the political change. Only in regions which, at that time, had become Roman, did Parthian art survive for some time: the paintings of the synagogue at Dura-Europos, still purely Parthian in style, and by far the most important document surviving of late "Parthian painting", are dated to about A.D. 245.[1] Thus they are about

[1] C. H. Kraeling, *The Synagogue. The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report* VIII part I (New Haven, Conn., 1956), pls. XVIII–XXI etc.

twenty years later than this change, and contemporary with the oldest Sasanian rock-reliefs in Fārs, that is with the oldest documents of the new art of Persia.

In the east something different took place. Between "Graeco-Iranian" art and "Graeco-Buddhist" art, which is but Graeco-Iranian art taking service with the new faith imported from India, there is no stylistic break any more than between pagan and Christian art in the Roman empire of the 4th century. That is "Graeco-Iranian" art lived on under its new Buddhist garment, just as Graeco-Roman art was to live on under its new Christian garment, while architecture and iconography only had to adapt themselves to new requirements. But with this development, art in the eastern Iranian countries nevertheless loses its properly Iranian character, and passes into the orbit of Indian culture. In spite of its having flourished in Iranian countries, in spite of all the links it has with Iranian culture, Graeco-Buddhist art is traditionally, and, as it seems to us, rightly, considered a branch of Indian art, remaining, therefore, outside the scope of the present volume.

To sum up we shall tentatively propose the following sketch.

In all Iranian countries after the conquest of Alexander, and for the eighty years or so of undisputed Graeco-Macedonian domination, art was predominantly Greek, with, however, some measure of Achaemenian survival.

With the disappearance of Greek power, this art of the early Hellenistic period slowly changed into "Graeco-Iranian" art, the monuments of Nisā giving us a glimpse of this process at its very beginning, in the late 3rd and early 2nd centuries B.C.

"Graeco-Iranian" art fully developed at the Iranian courts in Persia, Mesopotamia and Anatolia, on the one hand, the main extant instance being the great set of Commagenian monuments in the 1st century B.C., and at the Iranian courts between the Oxus and the Ganges on the other hand, where the main extant instances are the Scythian statues at Surkh Kotal and Mathurā at the time of Kanishka (early 2nd century A.D.?).

In the west, during the 1st century A.D., "Graeco-Iranian art" itself gave birth to something new, "Parthian art", characterized in architecture (at least in Mesopotamia) by an extension of vaulting to large halls, in figurative arts by "Parthian frontality". It ends with the deep and sudden change, both political and cultural, brought about by the advent of the Sasanians.

In the east, "Graeco-Iranian" art survived without great change, until, sometime in the late 1st or early 2nd century A.D. it came to serve the new faith imported from India, thus transmuting itself into "Graeco-Buddhist" art.

Thus the hellenizing period in the art of the Iranian or Iranized countries, ends in Persia (and probably in Lower Mesopotamia) with the sudden change from Parthian to Sasanian art about A.D. 225; in the west, that is in Upper Mesopotamia and in the Syrian desert, Parthian art lingers on until we lose sight of it, owing to the destruction of Dura (256) and Palmyra (272); in the east, that is in the countries between the Oxus and the Indus, "Graeco-Iranian" art is absorbed into Indian art through its conversion to Buddhism.

CHAPTER 29(*a*)

SASANIAN ART

I. INTRODUCTION

The art of the Sasanian period begins, officially, with Ardashīr's accession to the throne of the last Parthian ruler of Iran at Ctesiphon in the year A.D. 226. In fact, however, it already had its genesis in the art produced in Fārs under the kings of Persis well before that date. Ardashīr, it will be seen, had built a city and the first "Sasanian" palace at Fīrūzābād before, perhaps as a prelude to, his defeat of the Parthians, and the first coinage of his new dynasty followed closely that which he had issued at Stakhr while still a Parthian vassal.[1]

During the nearly four and a half centuries of Sasanian rule in Iran, as with the previous five and a half centuries discussed by Professor Daniel Schlumberger in the foregoing chapter, coins are the only art form that can be traced in unbroken continuity. In establishing his first Sasanian coinage Ardashīr sought to reaffirm and express the connection of his dynasty with its Iranian past. Although in his earliest coins there is still a certain dependence in the portrait style and the helmet headdress on Parthian prototypes, a clear break with the Hellenistic coinage traditions was manifest by the replacement of the former divine figures on the reverse with the Zoroastrian fire altar and by the substitution of Pahlavī for Greek in the legends. In his later coins the portrait is modified, evidently individualized, and the headdress is replaced by a more elaborate Sasanian version incorporating the mural crown and later is replaced by the mural crown alone. This crown which had been worn by the Achaemenian rulers had been perpetuated as a headdress of divinities on the coins of Stakhr.[2] Another version of this crenellated crown was adopted by Shāpūr I and from this time on each Sasanian ruler was identified by his own characteristic crown. These were faithfully reproduced on the coins and have made it possible to establish their entire chronological sequence.[3]

[1] See G. F. Hill, "The Coinage of the Ancient Persians", *SPA*, pp. 402–3, pl. 126; *idem*, *BMC*, *Arabia*, pp. clx–clxxxii and 195–244, and pls. XXVIII–XXXVII.

[2] Hill, *SPA*, pl. 126N, O and R, and *BMC*, *Arabia*, pls. XXVIII, -IV, -VI and -VII.

[3] See Chapter 4, p. 135, fig. 1.

The coins struck under Ardashīr and his immediate successor, Shāpūr I, were of extremely high quality, so fine, in fact, that they have often been attributed to Greek die cutters,[1] an attribution which is not borne out by the historical context. Ardashīr's first Sasanian coins are not greatly superior to those of the days of his vassalage when it is not likely he would have had easy access to skilled Greek craftsmen. Furthermore, while there is some development in the plastic quality of the coins under Shāpūr I, there is no marked change that could be explained as the work of Greek or Roman artisans from among the ranks of the prisoners taken by him after his defeat of Valerian (A.D. 260). In view of the high quality of Achaemenian coinage and that which continued under the *frataraka* and the kings of Persis,[2] there seems no cogent reason to doubt that the early Sasanian coinage could also have been produced by Iranian die cutters.

Unfortunately, the high quality of the early coinage began to show signs of deterioration soon after the reign of Shāpūr II. From that time on there is a steady decline in style as well as technical competence. The modelling becomes flatter and flatter and finally disappears altogether. The portraits eventually become mere caricatures and the details of the crown are often so carelessly drawn as to make identification difficult. The attendants of the fire altar on the reverse lose the monumentality and movement that characterized those of the earlier issues, becoming stiff and ill-defined. The early coins, with their excellent sculptural quality and refined style, can be compared to advantage to other contemporary art forms, particularly the great rock reliefs carved for the same rulers; such comparisons cannot be sustained, however, for the later periods, and in any case they are restricted by the paucity of dated monuments. It would seem that the aesthetic value of the coinage was soon subordinated to its practical economic function and that after a short, brilliant period, it ceased to serve as a medium for artistic expression.[3]

2. ARCHITECTURE

If the architectural monuments of the second half of the millennium between Alexander and Islam are more numerous than those of the first half, they are nevertheless discouragingly meagre. In all, as documents

[1] This view was expressed as early as 1840 by A. de Longpérier, *Essai sur des médailles des rois perses de la dynastie sassanide* (Paris, 1840), pp. 5 and 11, and it has frequently been repeated; Camille Trever ("Sasanian Coinage. B. Artistic Character", *SPA*, pp. 821–3) opposes this view.

[2] See chap. 8(*b*).

[3] See chap. 9.

of the architectural achievements of this long period of the rule of one of the largest and most powerful of the Near Eastern empires, we have only the ruins of some ten palaces, bits and pieces of a few fortresses, significant remains of a dozen or so fire temples, a number of other minor monuments supplemented by an assortment of archaeological remains and a few bridges and dams.[1] Even the surviving monuments are little more than tumbled heaps of rubble or crumbling brick. Built originally of local materials, these great grey heaps seem to be slowly melting back into the desolate landscape which surrounds them. Without exception they stand isolated, devoid of their original urban contexts and the parks and gardens which completed their architectural concepts. Time and history, it seems, have dealt with them unjustly if we compare their fate with the happier circumstances of many of the contemporary monuments of Rome and Byzantium. Standing before the tumbled mass of rubble at Fīrūzābād (pl. 81*b*) or Sarvistān (pl. 84*a*) or the tragic remains of the great Ṭāq-i Kisrā (pl. 83) it requires all the imagination that one can summon to recreate in the mind's eye the splendours that the Sasanian rulers and their architects must actually have created. We have a little help from the accounts of contemporary Western sources and from the later Arab historians; but on the whole, we can be sure that any description based only, as it must be, on the meagre evidence which has survived cannot do justice to the architectural achievements of Sasanian Iran.

Oscar Reuther's contribution to the *Survey of Persian Art* provided what is still today the most comprehensive and detailed survey and descrpition of these few surviving monuments.[2] In the long intervening period, archaeology has added little to our knowledge in this field. Aside from Bīshāpūr and Takht-i Sulaimān,[3] no major monuments have been uncovered and, indeed, are not very likely to be. A few tantalizing traces of Sasanian structures have been revealed in the upper levels of a number of major archaeological sites,[4] e.g., Haftavān Tepe, Tureng Tepe, and Tepe Yaḥyā. Sīrāf offers promise for the future as do

[1] Those in Iran proper, which were known as of 1959, are listed by Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie*, pp. 238-239; Shippman, *Die Iranischen Feuerheiligtümer*, has greatly expanded the number of fire temples but the remains of the majority of them are not significant from an art-historical point of view.

[2] "Sāsānian Architecture", *SPA*, pp. 493–578, pls. 148–53.

[3] For the literature on these two monuments, see the Bibliography for this chapter.

[4] Brief summaries of current archaeological work have appeared annually in *Iran* since 1967 (vol. v); for fuller reports on these sites see: Vols VIII, X, XI (Haftavān Tepe); XI (Tureng Tepe); X (Tepe Yaḥyā); VI–XI (Sīrāf).

the renewed excavations at Bīshāpūr. As yet, however, there have been no discoveries which have added materially to our knowledge of Sasanian architecture as a whole or which have required any significant modification of established views concerning it.[1]

The principal monuments on which we must rely for an appreciation of the history and development of Sasanian architecture are a series of widely scattered and variously, not always securely, dated royal palaces. Fīrūzābād (pl. 81), the earliest of these, actually predates the beginning of the Sasanian era. It was built in Fārs by a young prince with dreams of the former grandeur of the ancestors from whom, perhaps wishfully, his family traced its origin and the name of one of whose illustrious rulers he bore.[2] This prince of Fārs, soon to become Ardashīr I, shāhanshāh of all Iran, having successfully extended his original domains into a sizeable kingdom which now included all of Fārs and Kirmān, built a new city and a palace for himself outside its walls. It was perhaps this expression of power and ambition which was responsible more than anything else for bringing on the confrontation with his Parthian overlord, Ardavān V, culminating in the battle on the plain of Hormizdagān in which Ardavān was defeated and slain.

Ardashīr's palace at Fīrūzābād, representing in monumental form a style and technique which had apparently evolved in Fārs in more modest scale in the preceding centuries,[3] already embodied all the basic elements of Sasanian architecture which were to last until the downfall of the empire and would survive long afterward in the Islamic architecture of Iran. The basic plan (fig. 1) is undoubtedly to be recognized as a continuation of the principles of palace architecture developed under the Achaemenids. This principle involved the juxtaposition of two separate but conjoined architectural complexes – the official and public palace and the attached residential quarters – the *apadāna* and the *harem*. At Fīrūzābād the *apadāna* is transformed, after the Parthian fashion, into a great open *aivān* construction. Here, however, unlike its Parthian prototype, the aivān served as a vestibule or

[1] The principal data on the majority of these monuments have been brought together by Reuther, *op. cit.*; footnotes there contain references to the earlier bibliography. Studies devoted to the individual monuments are listed in the Bibliography to this chapter.

[2] See E. Yar-Shater, "Were the Sasanians heirs to the Achaemenids?" in *Atti del convegno Internazionale sul Tema: La Persia nel Medioevo* (Rome, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1971), pp. 517–31, for a challenge to this traditional point of view.

[3] Regarding the probable indigenous character of the principal elements of Sasanian architecture see Reuther, *op. cit.*, p. 498; Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 124 and *Bichāpour I*, p. 4; Godard, *L'Art de l'Iran*, esp. pp. 209 and 217.



Map 15. Sasanian sites.

anteroom to the great domed chamber, presumably the main reception or throne room to which it gave access. It is the addition of this square hall covered by a dome carried on squinches that constitutes the principal innovation of the Sasanian architects. It will remain central to almost all future Sasanian palace plans and, although the monuments have not survived to testify to its continued use in Islamic palaces, the plan and mode of construction survived in the Iranian architects' solution to the problem posed by the need of a new architectural form to meet the demands of the new faith – the mosque.[1]

[1] See *CHI* IV, pls. 1–4 and figs. 1–3; V, pls. 1–5 and figs. 1–2.

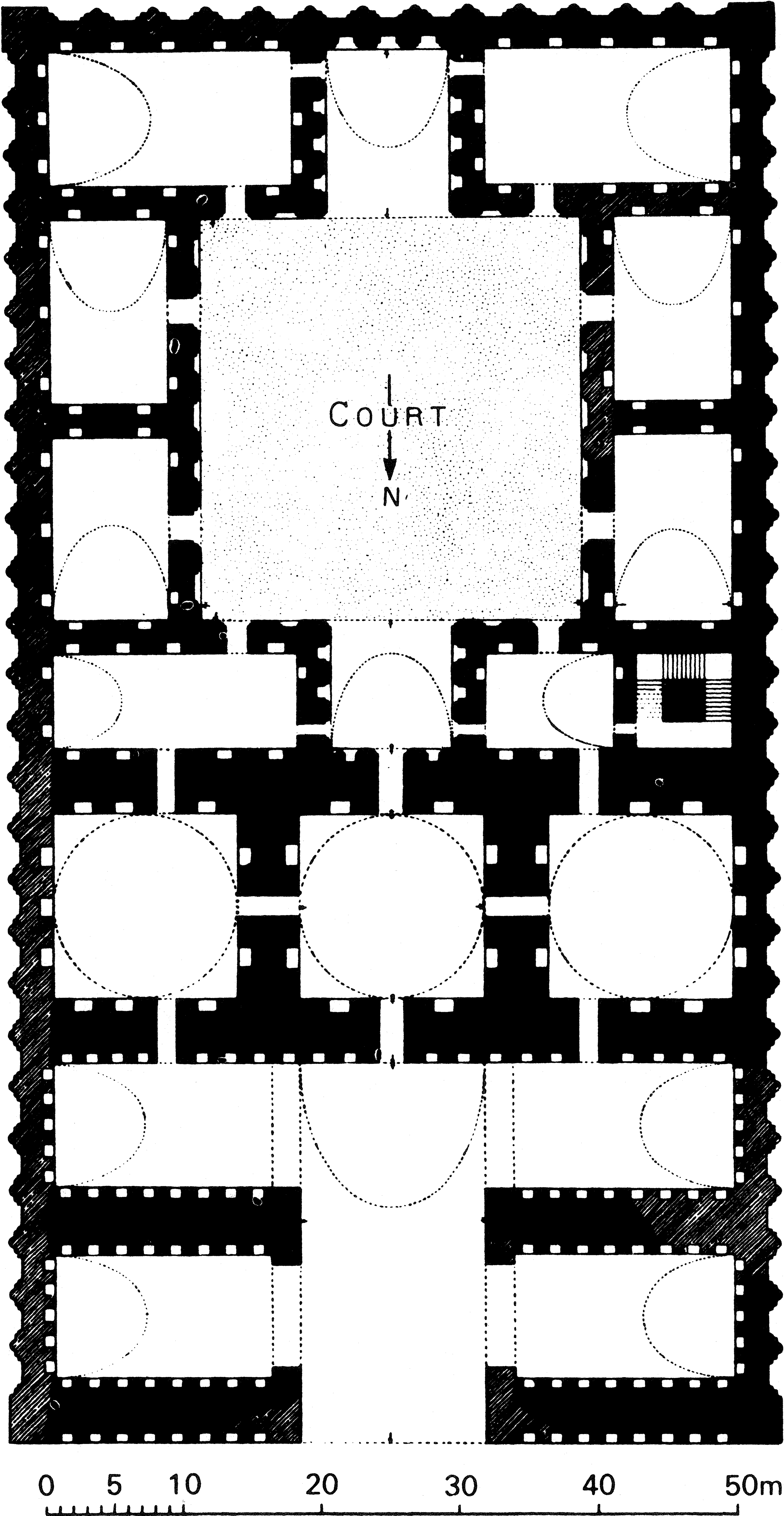


Fig. 1. Fīrūzābād. Ground plan of the palace.

In plan the palace of Fīrūzābād is a great rectangle, 55 × 104 metres, oriented north–south. It is composed of two very nearly equal parts. The northern part, higher in elevation than the other, constituted the official or public part of the complex. A great aivān, open to the outside on the north, served as entrance hall; it is flanked by pairs of long rectangular rooms oriented at right angles to it and beyond this unit, to the south, are three large square rooms, the throne room and attendant chambers. The aivān and flanking rooms were covered with barrel vaults and the square rooms with domes on squinches (pl. 82*a*); both vaults and domes were carried directly by the massive walls. The only light which could have made its way into this whole complex, save that which filtered in from the open aivān, came from four small windows pierced in the squinch zone of each dome. Symmetrically opposed doors in the north and south walls of the square rooms and in the walls between the rooms themselves provided the means of circulation within the palace proper and gave access, apparently the only access, to the residential complex beyond. The latter, today in almost total ruin, consisted of a large open court with small barrel vaulted aivāns centred on the northern and southern sides and a series of rectangular rooms, also covered with barrel vaults, which served as private apartments.

The construction of rubble and fast-setting gypsum mortar undoubtedly followed long established building traditions dictated by the locally available materials. To conceal the resulting crude structural effect the architect covered them, both inside and out, with stucco. Monotony of the exterior walls (pl. 81*a*), unpierced by door or window, was avoided and a chiaroscuro effect of light and shadow was achieved by breaking up the surfaces with a system of recesses and projected mouldings. Most of the main façade which flanked the open aivān has crumbled away but from the remaining fragment it can be seen that its decoration consisted of two rows of arched recesses, one just above the ground line, the other roughly coincident with the springing of the aivān vault. The lateral and back walls, still represented by the substantial remains of the west façade, were decorated with vertical recesses extending very nearly the full height of the building with pilasters projecting from the wall face separating them. They evidently terminated in round arches similar to those of the blind arches that can still be seen on the fragments of the façade of the interior court.

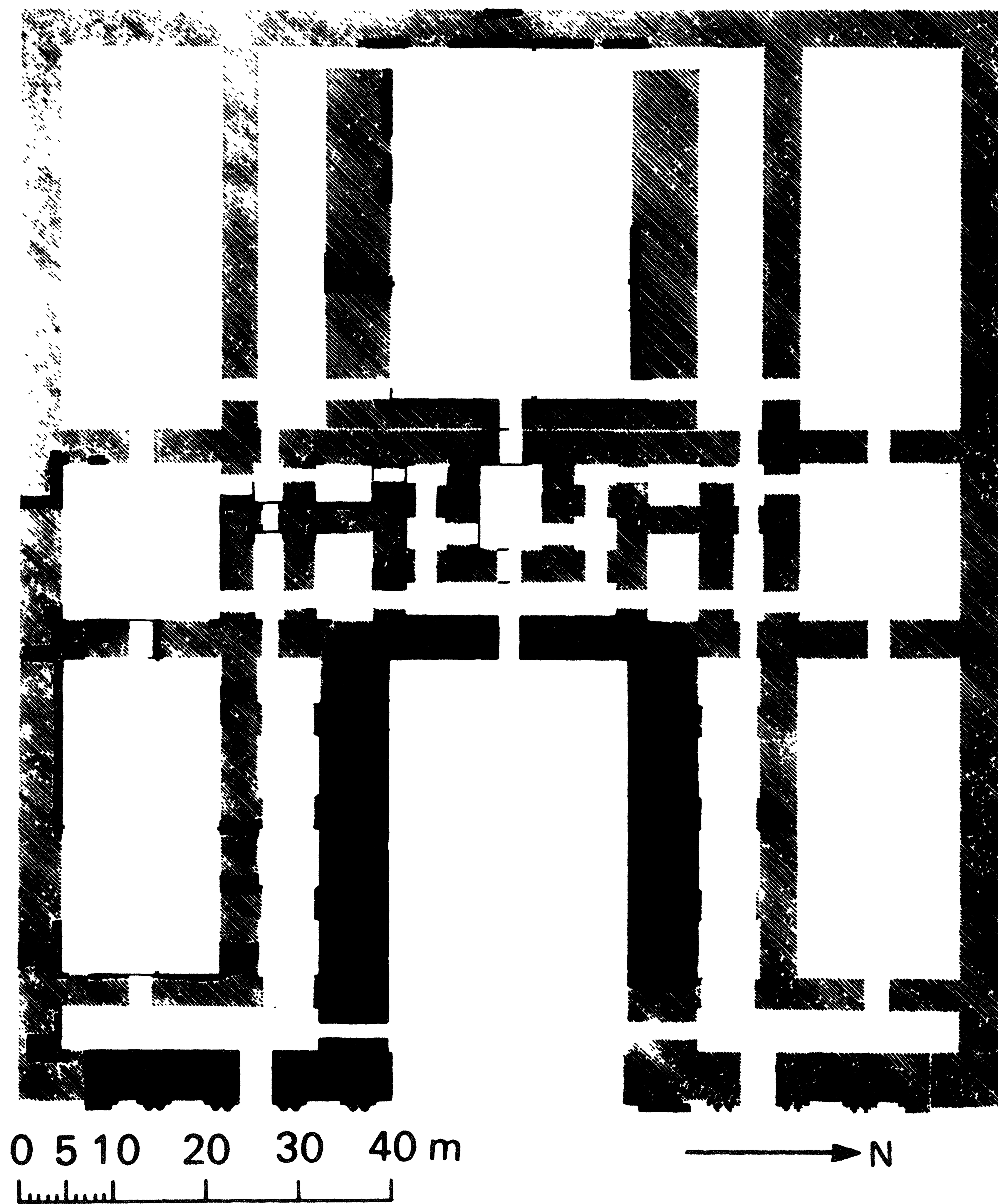
No trace remains of the interior decoration of the now almost totally destroyed main aivān; of the lateral rooms there can be seen,

still half buried, only a series of niches like the lower ones of the main façade. In the three domed rooms a single door pierced each of the interior walls and the rest of the wall was taken up by arched niches (pl. 82) of the same shape and proportions as the doors. All of the walls and the inner surface of the dome were covered with a smooth coat of stucco; the only decoration, as far as can be judged today, was the sculptured treatment of columns, and archivolts around the arches of the doors and niches culminating in elaborate cavetto cornices copied directly from prototypes in stone at Persepolis.[1] A single row of flat stones (or bricks?) laid diagonally forms a dentated cornice that marks the transition between the walls and the squinch zone. Judging from later buildings, it seems almost certain that paint must have enlivened the colourless stucco but no trace remains to confirm this fact.

Although we will see the development of the essentials of the Fīrūzābād plan and structure – the aivān and domed room – in the majority of the later Sasanian palaces, that built by Ardashīr's successor, Shāpūr I, at Bishāpūr (fig. 3) and another, of less certain date, at Ctesiphon (pl. 83, fig. 2), mark departures from this formula. They are more closely dependent on Parthian and Hellenistic influences in both plan and décor. In the case of Ctesiphon, this probably was largely due to its geographic setting and the fact that it replaced, and probably to a large extent imitated, the earlier Parthian palace on the same site. At Bīshāpūr, in Fārs, this western influence is surely to be traced directly to the great numbers of Roman artisans and labourers taken from the ranks of the 70,000 prisoners which fell into Shāpūr's hands with his defeat of Valerian at Edessa.

The date of the palace at Ctesiphon is not certain; its name, the Ṭāq-i Kisrā, attached to it by Arab tradition has given rise to speculation that it may have been built by Khusrau I (A.D. 531–79). Most authorities, however, accept the attribution of Ibn al-Muqaffa' to Shāpūr I (A.D. 241–72). Its close dependence on Parthian prototypes would seem to support this date, but as Reuther has pointed out, many of these same elements survived into Islamic times and cannot of themselves be taken as guarantees of an early date. We know, however, that Ctesiphon served as the western capital of the Sasanian empire from the moment of Ardashīr's accession in 226 and one can well imagine that the old Parthian palace was very soon replaced by the Sasanians. However we interpret the evidence regarding its date, we must accept the fact that in

[1] See *SPA*, pl. 86B.



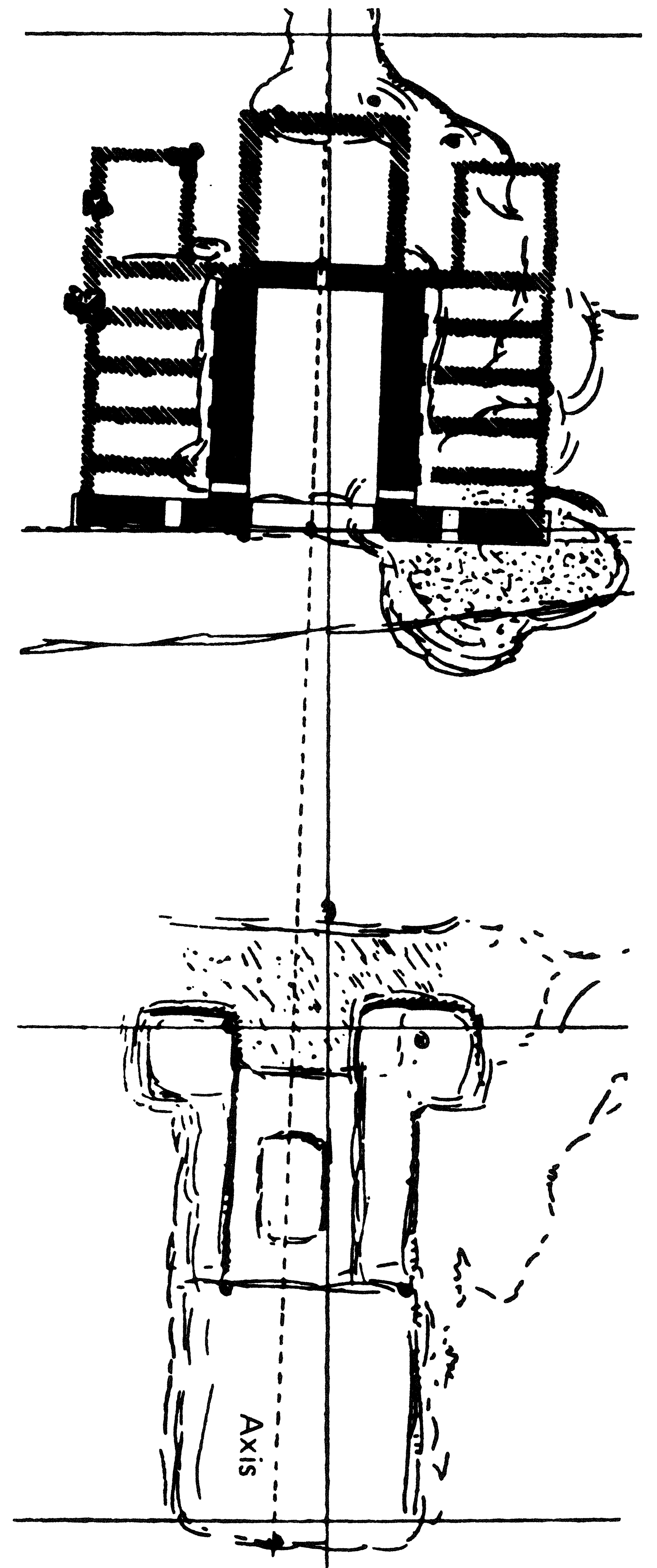


Fig. 2. Ctesiphon, Ṭāq-i Kisrā.

plan, in structure and exterior decoration, it represents a strong survival of local Parthian tradition. The great aivān (pl. 83), some 35 metres high with a span of more than 25 metres, opened onto an enclosed court across which it was faced by a second similar structure (fig. 2). In its totality this plan recalls that of the Parthian palace of Assur. The gigantic proportions, however, far overshadowed anything conceived by Parthian builders. Only a fragment of the great aivān and part of the façade still stand today. The rest of the building, as we know from the foundations, was broken up into five large rectangular rooms

connected by corridors and separated by a number of small rooms of various sizes and shapes. The large rectangular rooms were undoubtedly barrel vaulted like the main aivān; the smaller rooms may have been covered with domes.

The building materials here, following time honoured traditions of Mesopotamian architecture, were brick and mortar covered with stucco which served as a vehicle for decorative elaboration. The exterior decoration is only known from the façade (pl. 83) which, standing like a great proscenium unrelated to the structure behind it, consisted of six horizontal "stories" of niches and blind arcades carried on engaged columns. There was no attempt to effect a structural continuity from one story to another; these various decorative elements were conceived as pure decoration. Of the once sumptuous interior decoration, we have only descriptions relating to the time of Khusrau I, by contemporary Western and later Arab historians. From these we learn that the walls were covered with mosaic; in the throne room Khusrau is said to have been depicted as he appeared in the battle of Antioch. Confirmation of this fact is to be found in the numbers of glass tesserae that were found during the excavations. The presence also of fragments of coloured marbles suggests that this decoration, evidently imitating that of the Byzantine buildings of Antioch, probably consisted of marble floors and dadoes with the mosaics on the upper walls and presumably the vault of the great aivān.[1]

The excavations of the palace which Shāpūr built for himself in his newly founded city of Bīshāpūr, in Fārs, were interrupted by the Second World War and have never been completed. Thus far there have been revealed a great cross-shaped room formed by the convergence of four triple aivāns (fig. 3) whose vaults supported a high dome enclosing the entire complex; to the west are the remains of a small court; to the east a triple aivān and near the north-west corner a fire temple. Only fragments of a second palace were explored. Like Fīrūzābād, the construction at Bīshāpūr was of rubble and gypsum mortar concealed by a covering layer of stucco. Here, however, elaborate decorative motifs borrowed from Graeco-Roman sources – the Greek key, dentils, leaf scrolls and acanthus motifs – have preserved traces of their original brilliant black, red and yellow paint. A series of mosaics

[1] For the sources regarding the mosaic depicting Khusrau, see: Sarre and Herzfeld, *Arch. Reise* II, p. 70, and Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 397. On the archaeology, see Reuther, *op. cit.*, p. 533; and Kühnel, *Ausgrabungen . . . Ktesiphon*, p. 26.

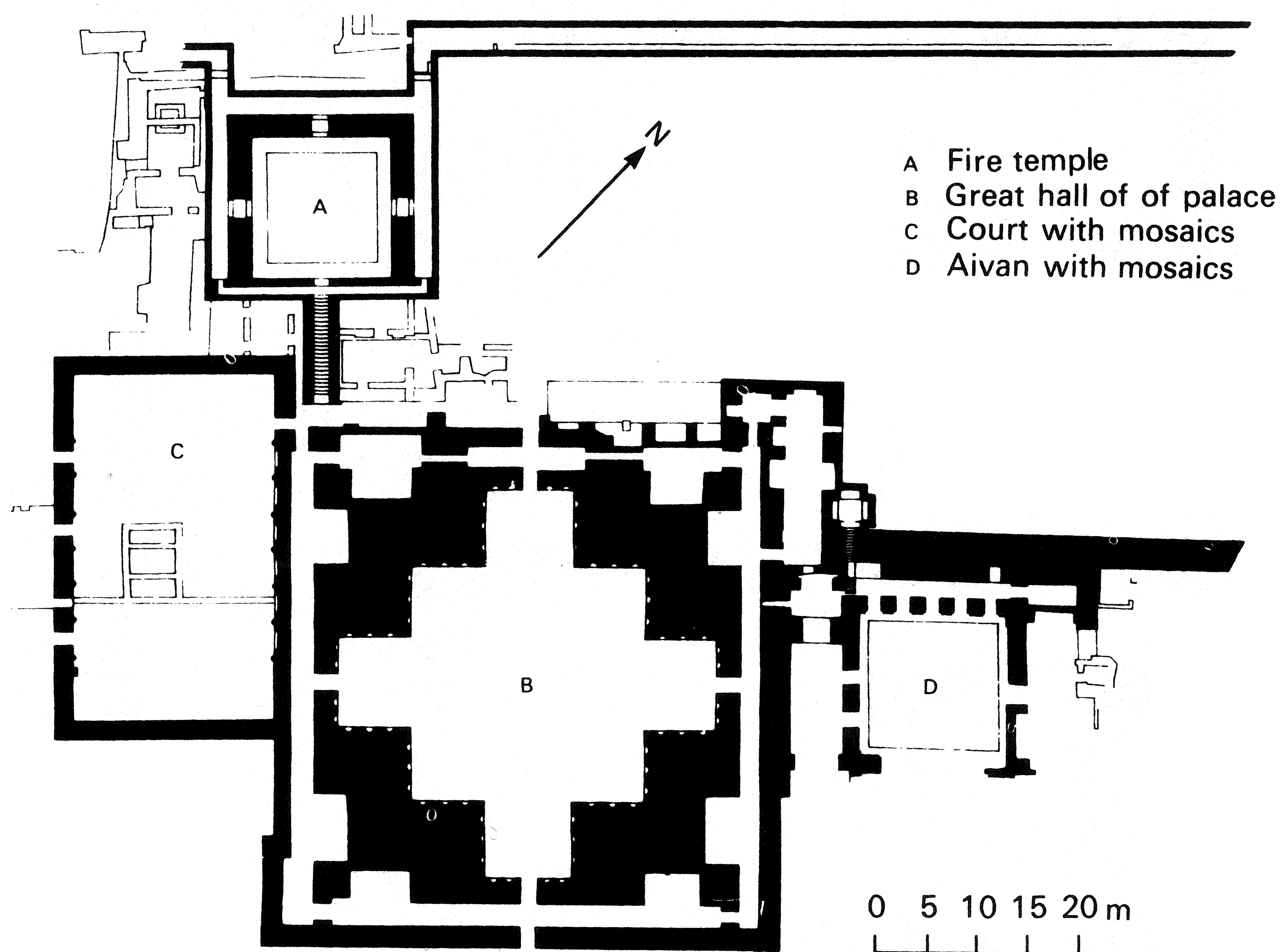


Fig. 3. Bīshāpūr.

representing Bacchic motifs – not royal banqueting themes as originally stated by the excavator – in almost pure Roman style bordered the floors of the eastern triple aivān.[1] In contrast to the strong Hellenistic influence in this part of the palace, the fragments of carved stone decorated with low relief figures of men standing or on horseback from the second palace seem to be a conscious imitation of the relief decoration at Persepolis.

Of the later Sasanian palaces, Sarvistān (pls. 84, 85, fig. 4), only roughly dated between the 4th and 6th centuries and often attributed to Bahrām V (420–38), is the best preserved. Located in Fārs, not far from Fīrūzābād, it has retained many of the features already developed in that building but also shows great advancement and originality in many aspects of its plan and construction. The plan (fig. 4), in principle,

[1] Ghirshman, *Bichāpour II*, pp. 38–148, esp. pp. 101–3, and pls. V–XV; *idem*, *Iran*, pp. 140–1, figs. 180–6 (in colour). Georges Salles was the first to recognize the Bacchic symbolism (see Salles, "Nouveaux documents", p. 98), a fact which seems to have been overlooked by later writers. The only extensive examination of this iconography is the recent study by H. von Gall (see Bibliog. under Bishāpūr).

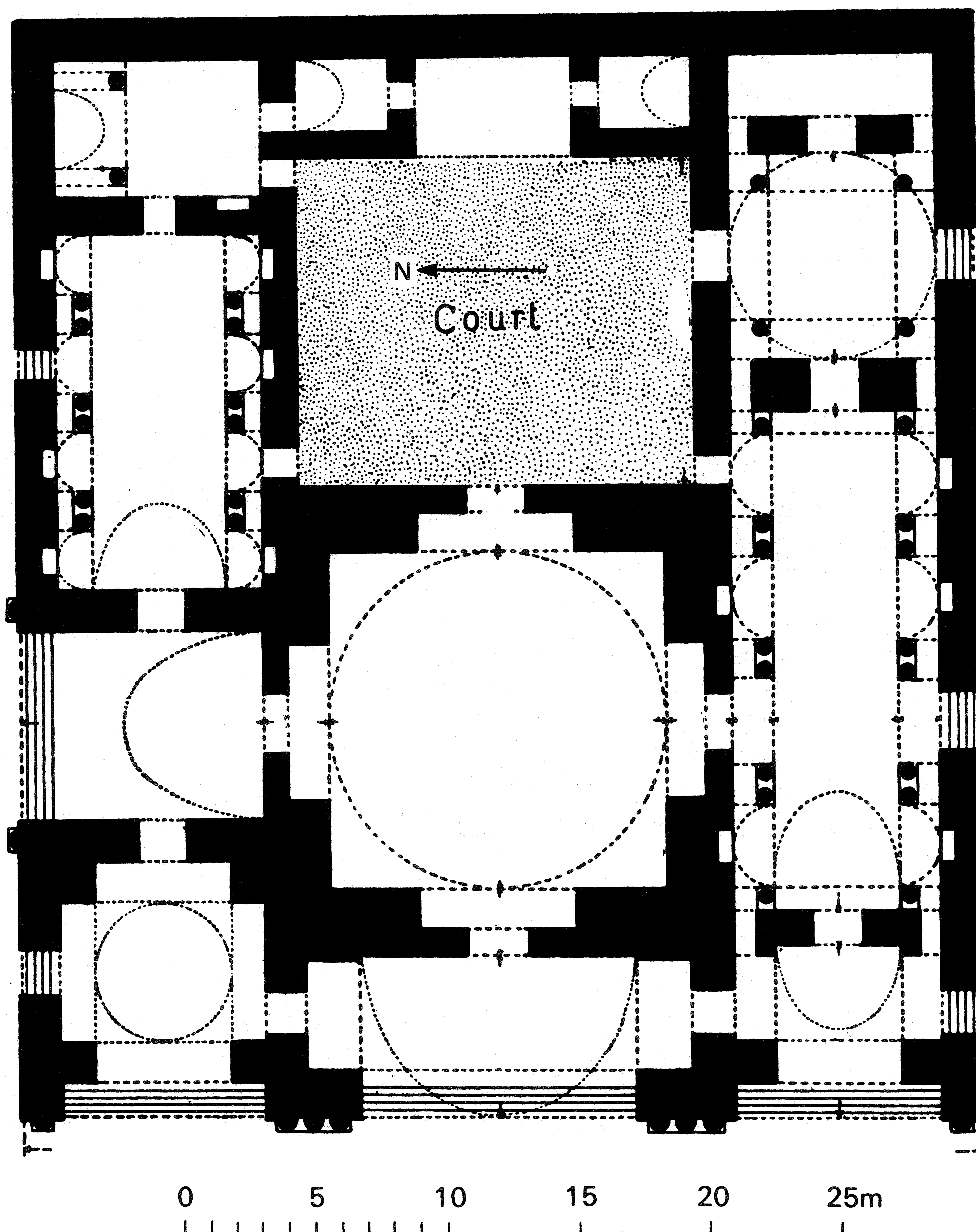


Fig. 4. Sarvistān. Ground plan of the palace.

follows that of Fīrūzābād; a central aivān serves as an antechamber to a large square throne-room and beyond there is an open court surrounded by smaller rooms. But here there is only one large square room and, in addition to the principal aivān in the main, western, façade another gives access from the north. The western aivān is flanked by two small rooms – one a vaulted aivān, the other, a square, covered by a small dome (pl. 84*b*). Externally these three rooms were united by identical triple aivān arches separated by groups of three engaged half-round

columns; these together with the single ones at the corners evidently carried, or appeared to carry, the cornice.

The building materials used at Sarvistān, like those of Fīrūzābād, were rubble and gypsum mortar; however, in this case flat fired bricks were employed for the construction of the dome above the squinch zone. The vaulting of the two large oblong rooms on the north and south sides of the building represents an entirely novel construction technique (pl. 85). Here the vaults instead of being carried directly by the walls are supported by a system of rectangular piers and the arches of the intervening half squinch domes thrown between them. The piers are carried on pairs of short columns standing only a few feet from the walls and connected to them by small arches. The system of arches carried on four corner pillars introduced by the Sarvistān architects in the small square room in the south-east corner, although without structural value, was nevertheless of considerable aesthetic merit. The walls of Sarvistān are not so massive as those of Fīrūzābād and the many external doors and the windows pierced in the squinch zone of the domes would have given this building a quality of lightness and airiness that must have been altogether lacking at Fīrūzābād. Unfortunately, aside from the engaged columns of the façade and the dentated frieze on the interior defining the squinch zones of the domes and underlining the semi-domes between the piers in the oblong rooms, we have no other clue as to the nature of the decoration of this palace.

Another innovation in vaulting was that developed by the architects of the Aivān-i Karkhā, not far from Susa, which was probably built under Kavād I in the late 5th or early 6th century.[1] Here (fig. 5) the great central square room was transformed into an open pavilion, like a *chahār-ṭāq*, each side framed by open arches reaching almost the full height of the building. Over this the canopy-like dome was carried on squinches in the traditional manner. On either side of this central room and of the same width, there stretched two long symmetrical wings. These long rooms were spanned by five wide arches alternating with transverse barrel vaults. Windows in the screen walls and the open arches of the central pavilion must have provided brilliant lighting for the frescoes which once decorated its walls.[2]

The ʿImārat-i Khusrau, on the road to Kirmānshāh, is believed to

[1] This building is generally attributed to Shāpūr II; for the attribution to Kavād I, see Christensen, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

[2] Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 181; *idem*, *Mémoires de la Mission*, pp. 10–12.

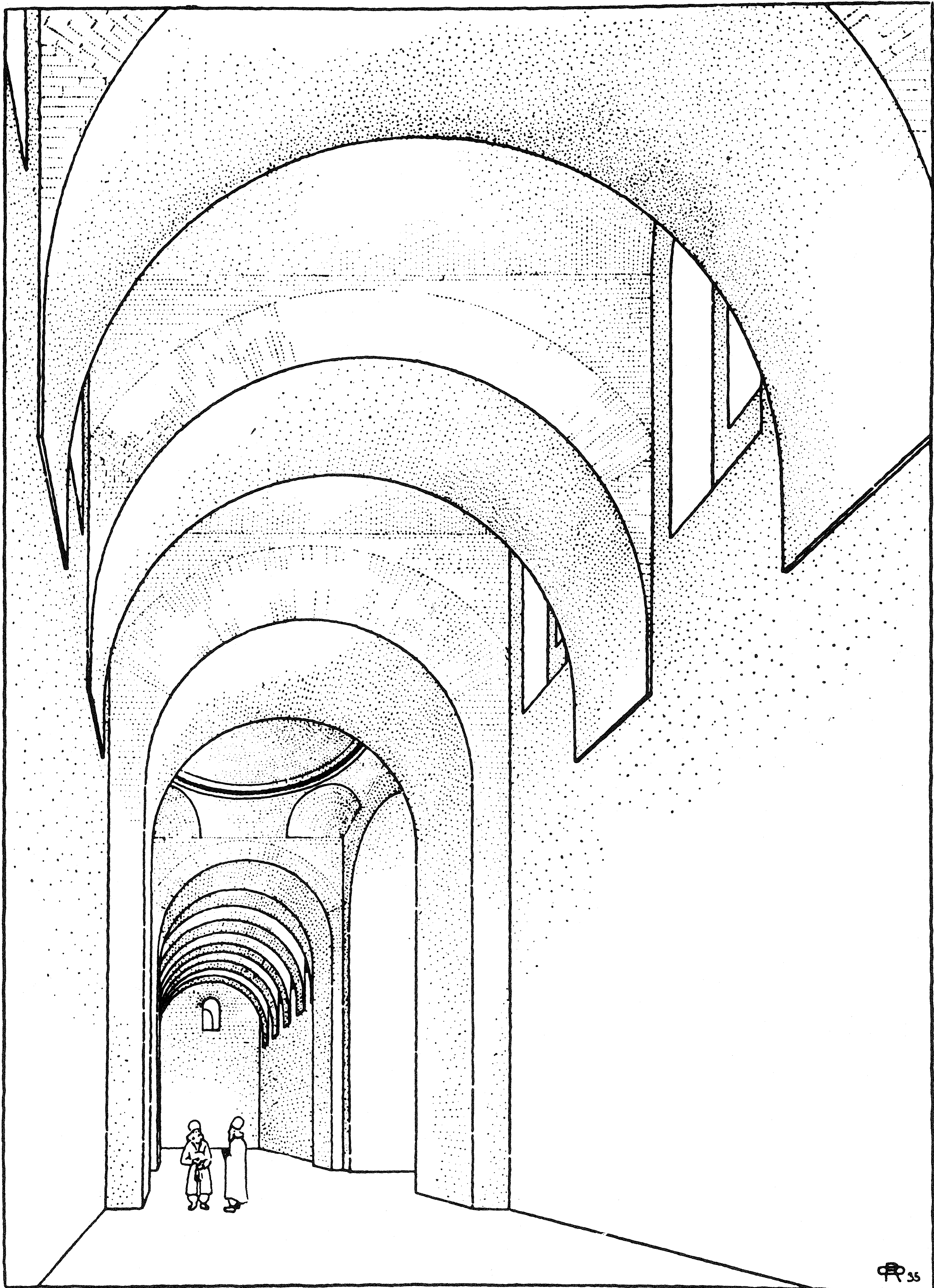


Fig. 5. Aivān-i Karkhā, elevation.

have been built by Khusrau II for his favourite, Shīrīn. In basic plan (fig. 6) it followed that established at Fīrūzābād; a triple aivān and a dome covered square reception room formed the palace proper and beyond this complex an open colonnaded court surrounded by a series of smaller aivān units constituted the domestic quarters. The palace stood on a high terrace reached by double ramps, or staircases, recalling

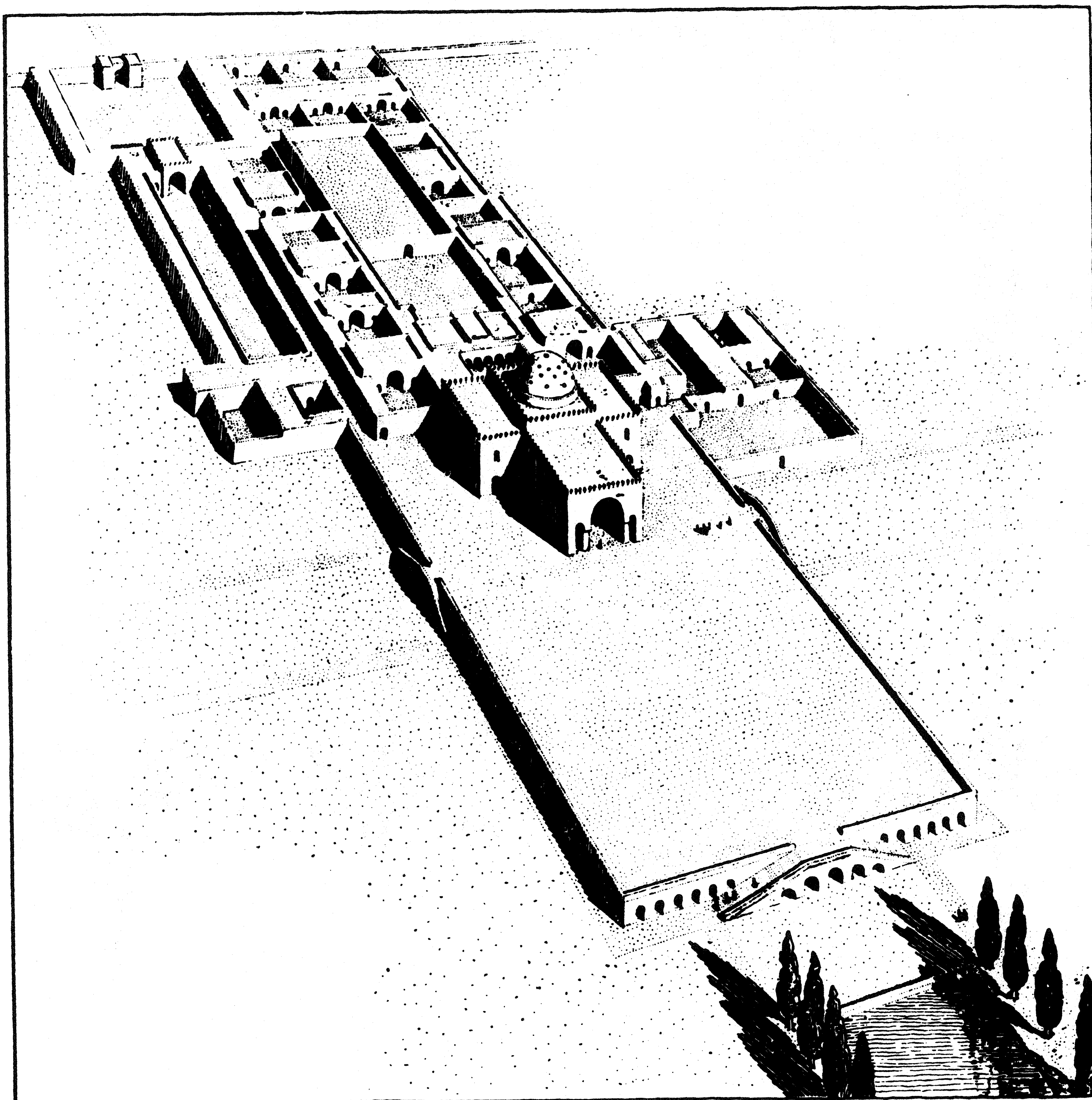


Fig. 6. Qaṣr-i Shīrīn, ʻImārat-i Khusrau: proposed reconstruction of exterior.

those of Persepolis. The construction here, following local building traditions, utilized mud-brick and plaster. The Arab historians[1] have left us glowing descriptions of its fabulous setting in a great park, surrounded by gardens, pavilions, water basins, menageries, etc., but the only other building of which any evidence remains is that which is today known as the Chahār Qāpū, the original purpose of which is not known.

Two late palaces at Dāmghān, in northern Iran, and Kish, in Mesopotamia, carried forward the structural principles developed at Sarvistān and in the Aivān-i Karkhā. This is illustrated at Dāmghān (pl. 86, figs. 7, 8) where the central aivān was a wide columned hall with the vault carried on great round piers; arches may also have joined the latter to the side walls as at Sarvistān. The traditional square room beyond this

[1] M. Streck, *Encyclopedia of Islām* (Leyden, 1927), *s.v.* "Ḳaṣr-i Shīrīn", p. 805.

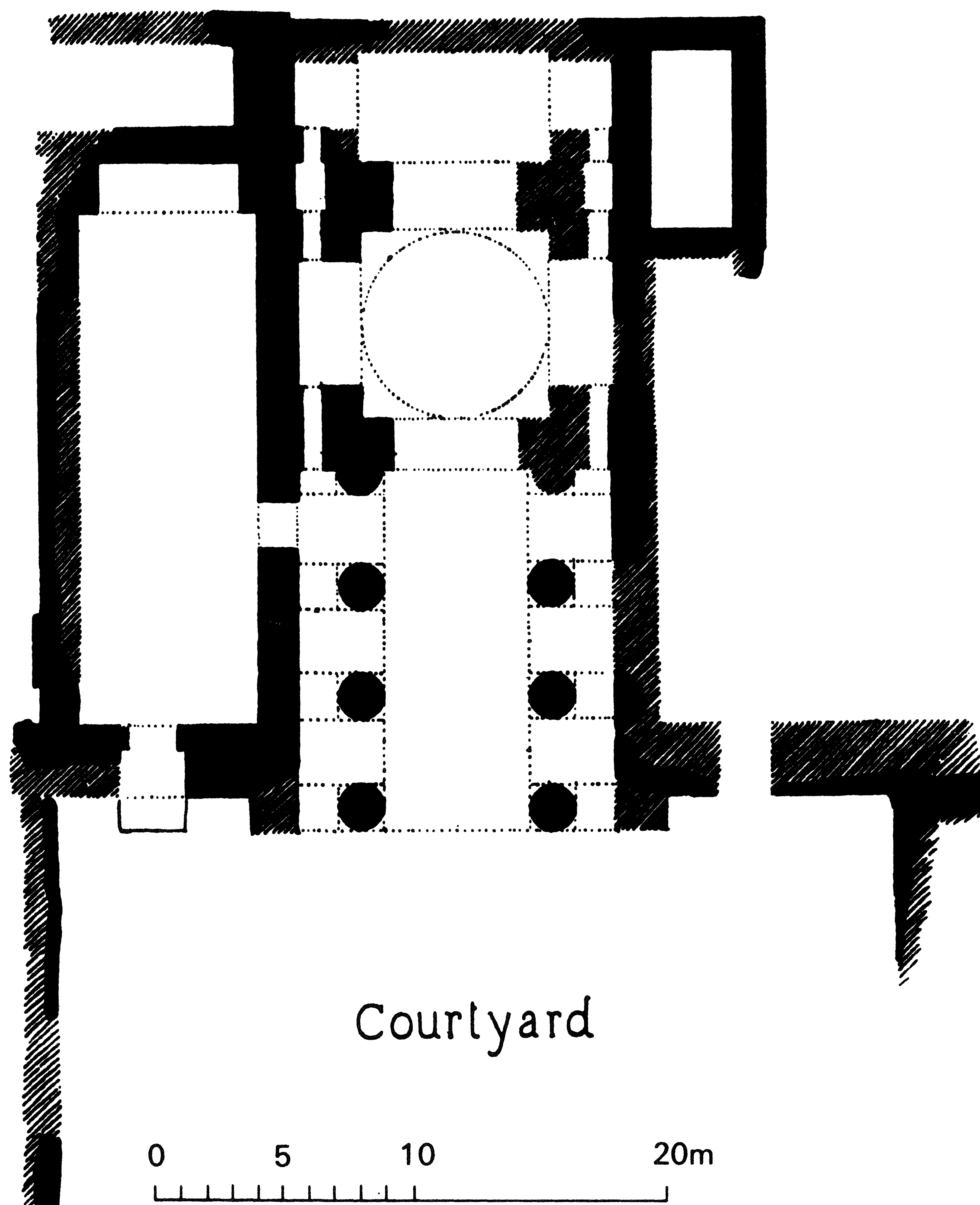


Fig. 7. Dāmghān (Tepe Ḥiṣār), plan.

aivān, which was probably domed, was surrounded by four large open arches which produced the same pavilion effect as in the Aivān-i Karkhā. Palace II at Kish (fig. 9) had a columned room that may have been vaulted by a system similar to that at Dāmghān. An innovation in these two buildings was the differentiation between the height of the central aivān and those which flanked it (fig. 8). At both Dāmghān and Kish the construction was of brick covered with stucco, and both show, similarly, a marked development in the use of this medium for elaborately patterned revetments covering the walls as well as the piers or columns, the torus above the dadoes and the archivolts (pl. 86). At Kish, in Palace I, human busts in relief (pl. 87*a*) were incorporated in

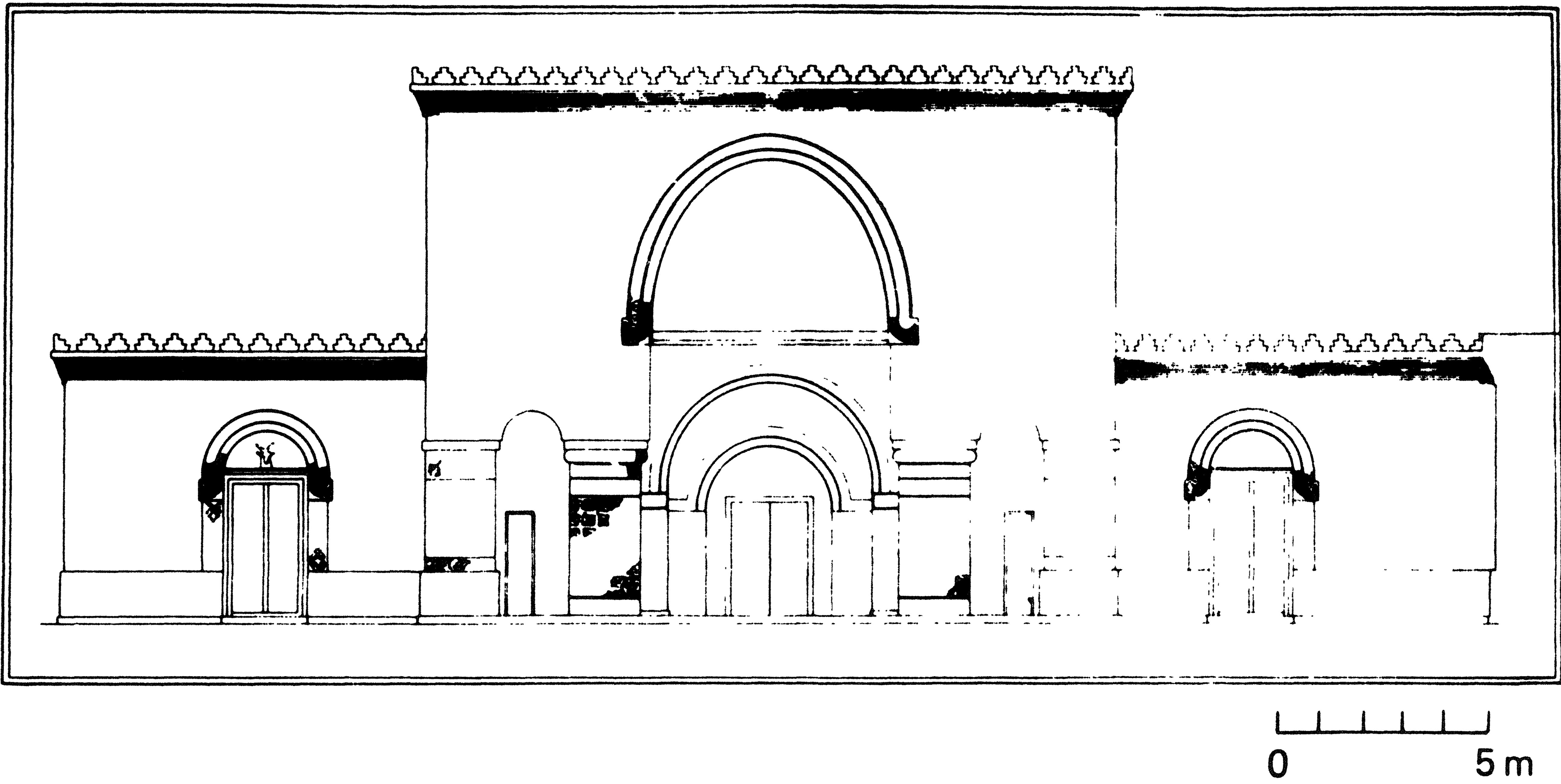


Fig. 8. Dāmghān (Tepe Ḥiṣār), reconstruction of façade by Fiske Kimball.

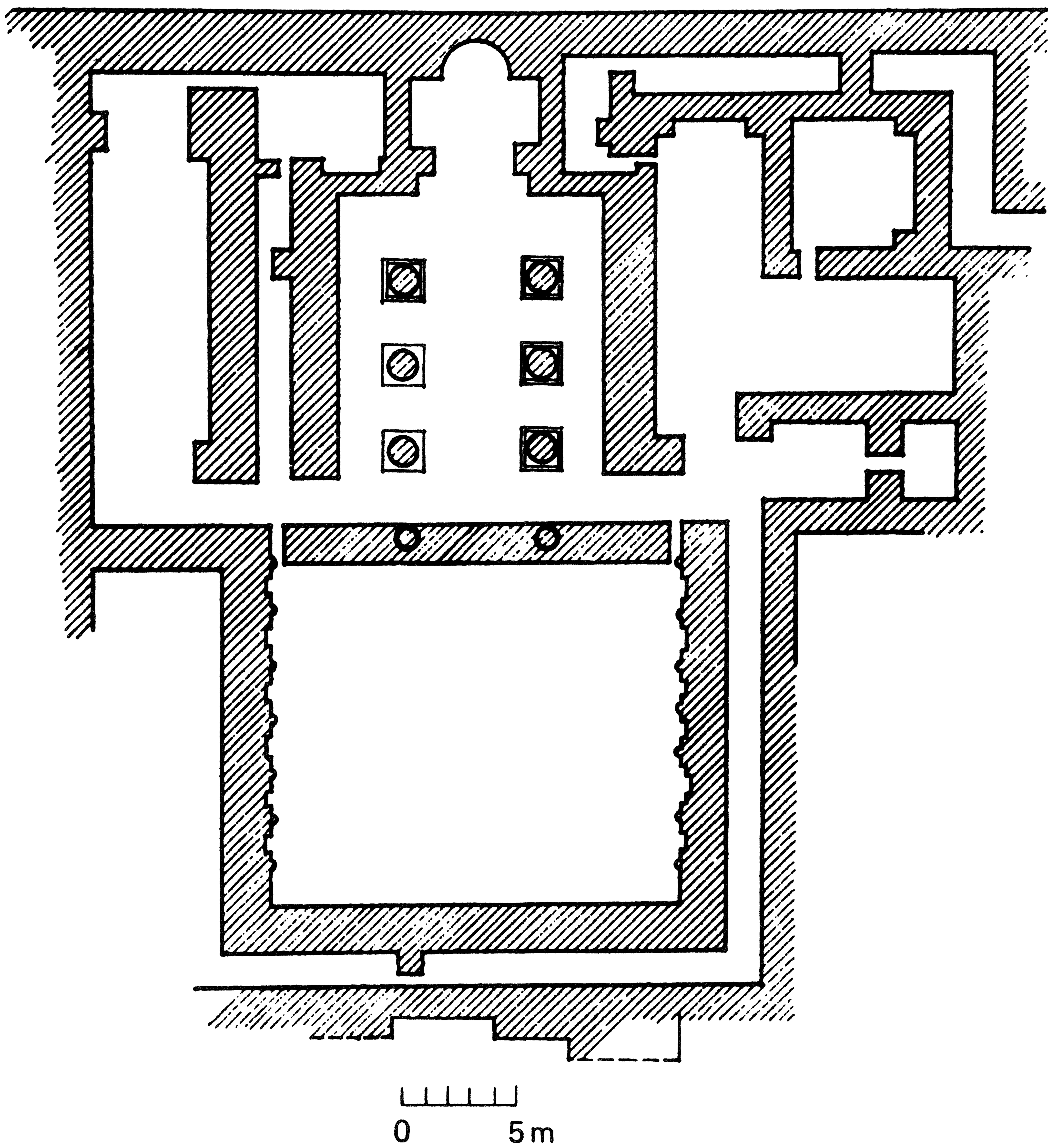


Fig. 9. Kish, Palace II, plan.

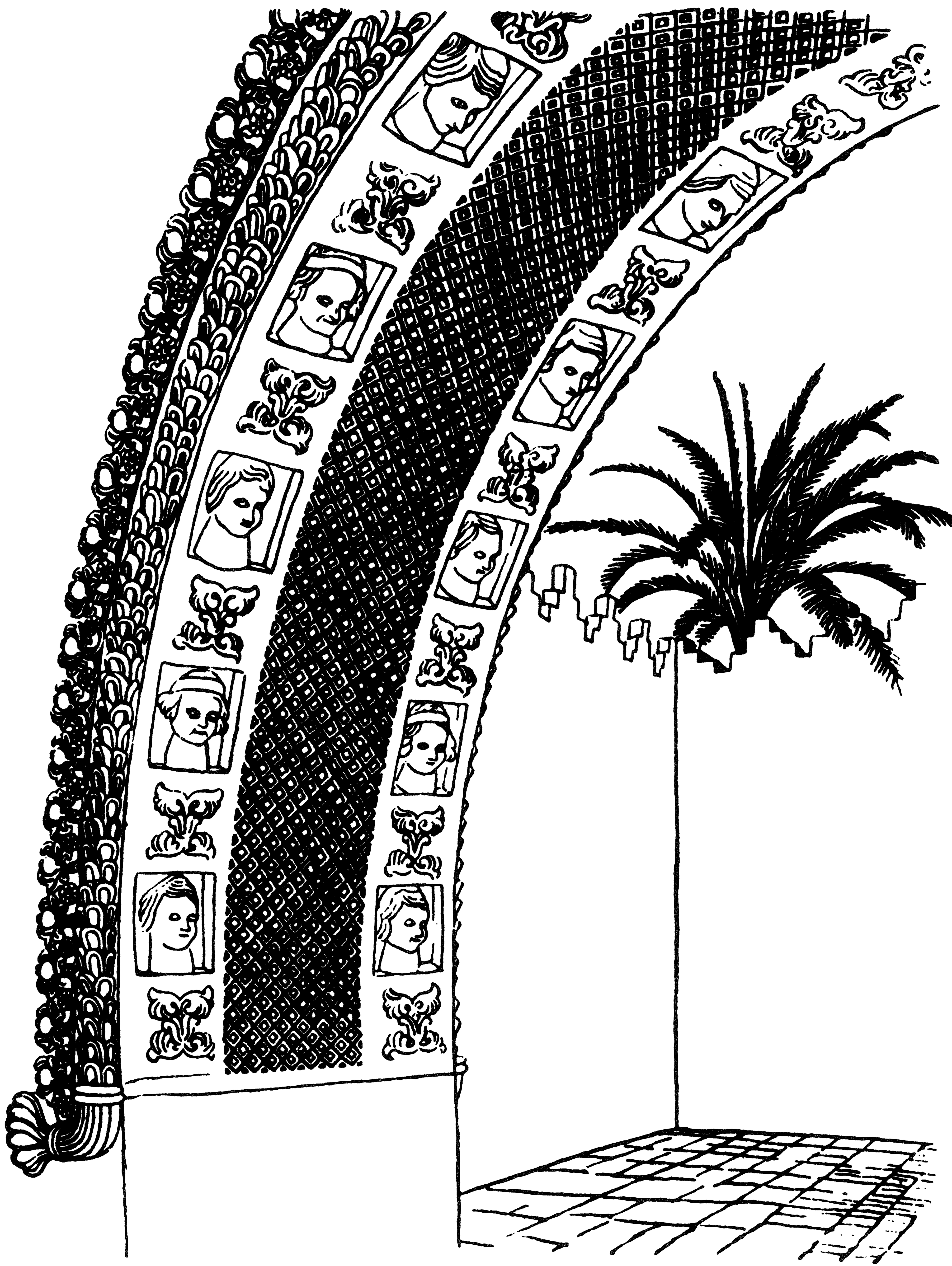


Fig. 10. Kish, Palace I, reconstruction of portal arch showing distribution of stucco ornament.

the ornament (fig. 10) and in the courtyard of Palace II, fourteen nearly full round busts (pl. 87*b*) whose crowns have been interpreted – perhaps somewhat freely – as that of Shāpūr II[1] were found together with fourteen half columns; unfortunately, their original disposition is not certain; the reconstruction (fig. 11) is conjectural. In this palace the stucco in the columned room was painted, some in polychrome and the rest in either plain red or yellow. Similar stucco decorations found in

[1] First attributed to Shāpūr II by Stephen Langdon, in *Illustrated London News* (March 7, 1931), p. 369, and repeated by Watelin, *SPA*, p. 587; Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 228, says "Bahram Gur?"

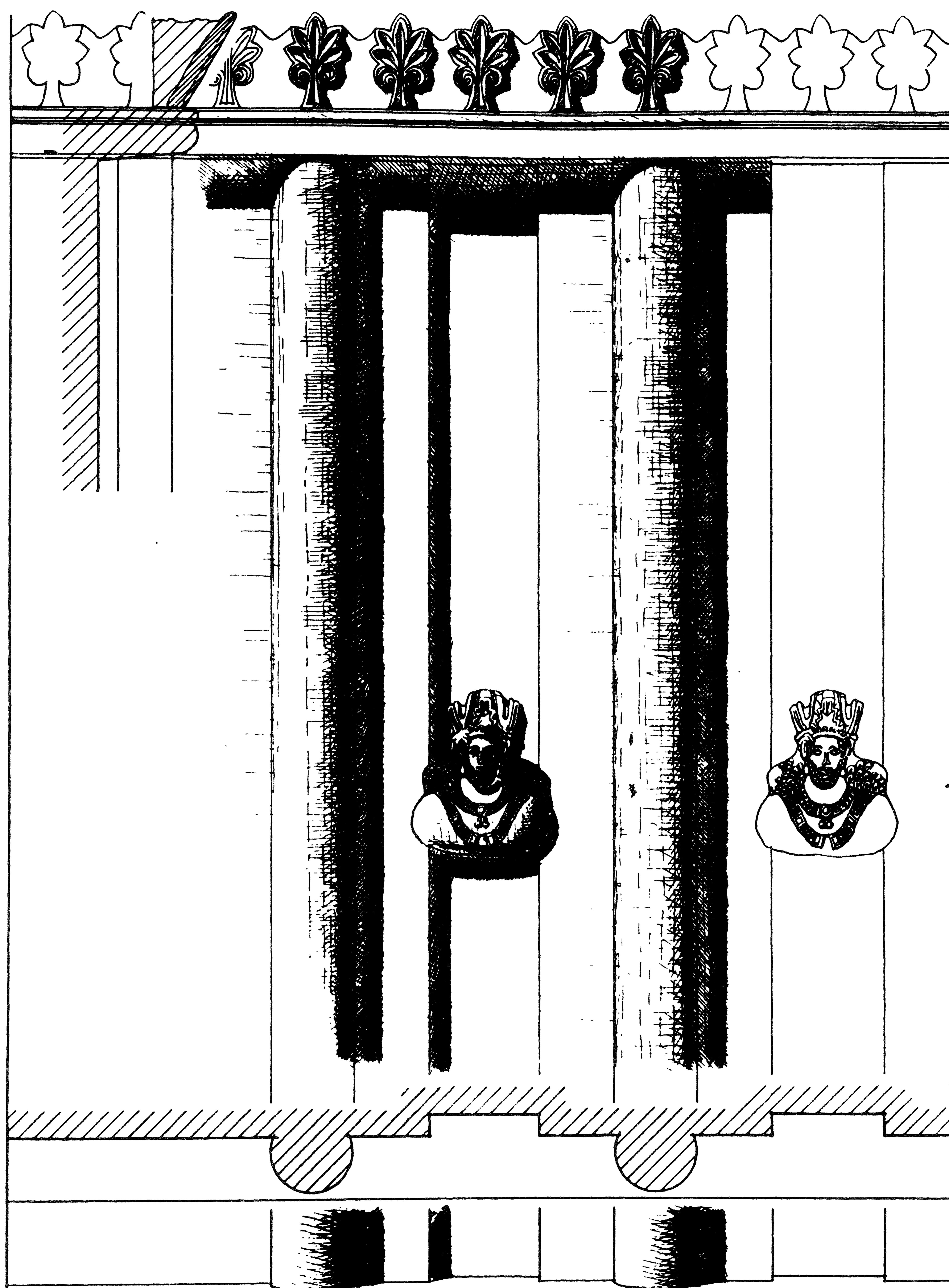


Fig. 11. Kish, Palace II, reconstruction of façade, showing suggested placement of the King's busts.

the ruins of a group of private houses, or villas, excavated at Ctesiphon,[1] are very similar to those from Kish and Dāmghān and seem to suggest that by this late date, at least, such elaborate stucco decoration was not the apanage of royalty alone. This characteristic medium of Sasanian architectural decoration was to be perpetuated under Islam for at least a thousand years and was carried from one end of the Islamic world to the other.

[1] Schmidt, "L'Expédition de Ctésiphon", p. 17.

As the result of ever-increasing new discoveries and the identification of older sites, we now have a very substantial number of monuments illustrating the various forms of Sasanian religious buildings.[1] Aside from the fact that they are generally very poorly preserved, they are for the most part, by their very nature, not impressive architecturally and the majority scarcely qualify for inclusion in a brief study devoted to the history of art. Within the limitations imposed here, they can only be touched on very briefly.

As now can be determined, the Sasanian cult buildings followed two basic forms. The one, the enclosed fire temple, the *ātashgāh*, comprised a closed central room, square in plan, surrounded by a narrow passageway. The temple at Bīshāpūr[2] was apparently covered with a flat roof carried on wooden beams which were supported on large blocks sculptured in the form of addorsed pairs of bull protomes inspired by the impost blocks at Persepolis.[3] But the more usual roofing, as illustrated by many temples scattered throughout Fārs and elsewhere in Iran,[4] was a dome on squinches carried on four piers connected by arches. It is this element, without the surrounding corridor, which was carried over into the second type of cult building. It resulted in a simple open pavilion with a dome carried on squinches carried by four open arches – the chahār-ṭāq. They existed separately or, as probably was more often the case, as complementary pairs. Although isolated chahār-ṭāqs are more common, among the known fire temples, Vanden Berghe has recently reported several more elaborate complexes, for example, one at Kunār Siyāh (pl. 88*a*, fig. 12).[5] At Takht-i Sulaimān (pl. 88*b*, figs 13,14), in spite of the elaborate development of the surrounding complex, these two forms are the basic elements of the plan there. The clearing of this great structure, which the excavations have now definitely established is of Sasanian date, has revealed for the first time the full elaboration of an extensive sanctuary complex as opposed to the more usual small closed temple and the chahār-ṭāq.[6]

[1] See the principal references in the Bibliography to this chapter. On other religious buildings see Reuther, *op. cit.*, pp. 560–566.

[2] Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 149, figs. 189–91; for further references, see under "Bīshāpūr" in the Bibliography.

[3] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 190 and compare the Persepolis protomes in *idem*, *Persia from the Origins to Alexander* (London, 1964), figs. 264 and 266.

[4] See e.g., Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie*, pls. 15b, 19a, 74b–c; *idem*, "Récentes découvertes", with excellent plans and photographs of a whole series of such temples which the author discovered during two campaigns of exploration in 1959–60 and 1960–1.

[5] "Récentes découvertes", pp. 175–81.

[6] See the Bibliography under this site.

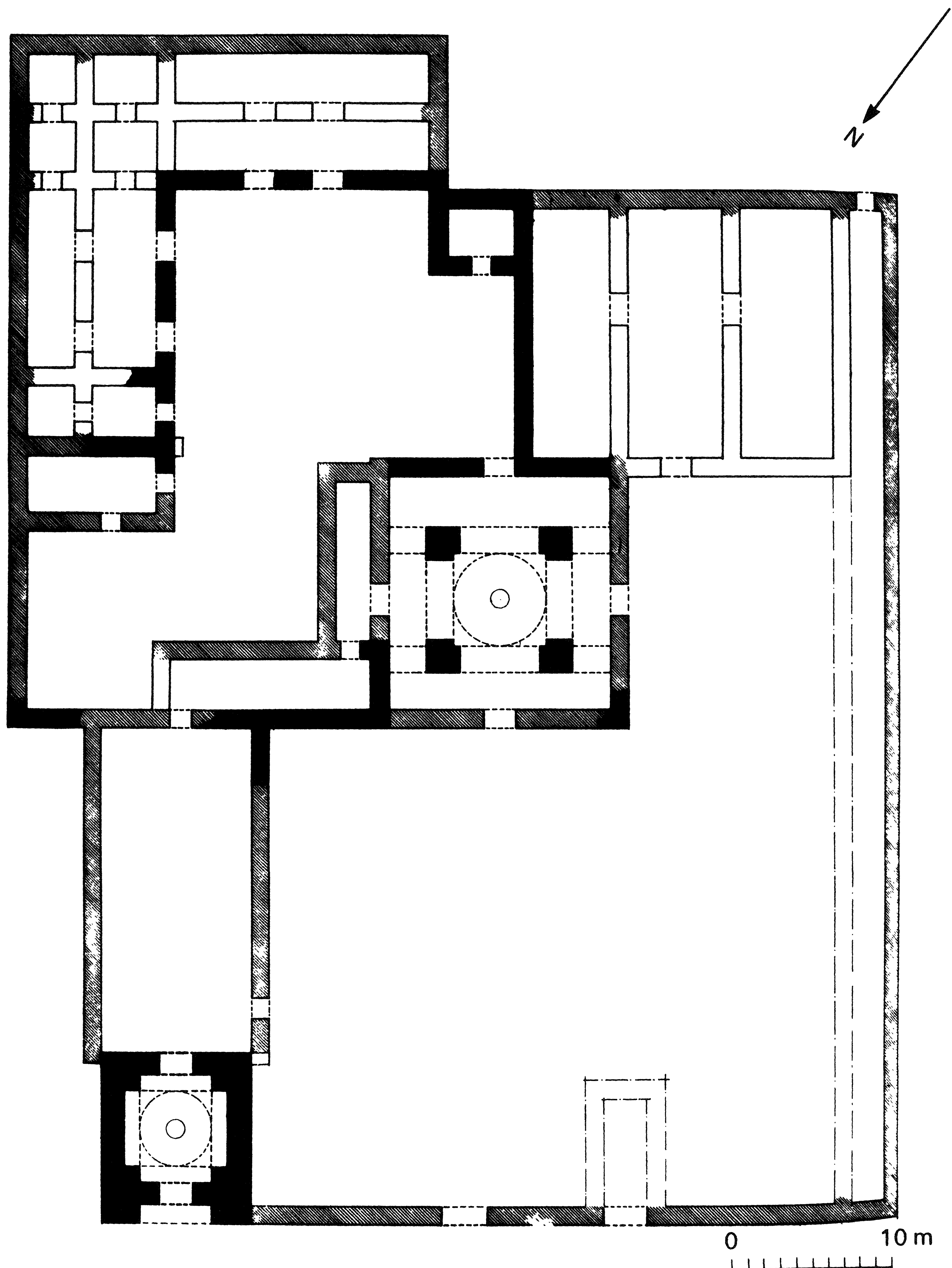


Fig. 12. Kunār Siyāh, plan of fire temple.

The majority of the known fire temples are built in the usual rubble and gypsum mortar technique (pl. 88*a*), but that at Bishāpūr was built of ashlar masonry in a technique which, according to Ghirshman, was of Roman derivation.[1] At Takht-i Sulaimān the inner temple and chahār-ṭāq were constructed of baked brick; in the rest, probably representing a

[1] *Iran*, p. 149.

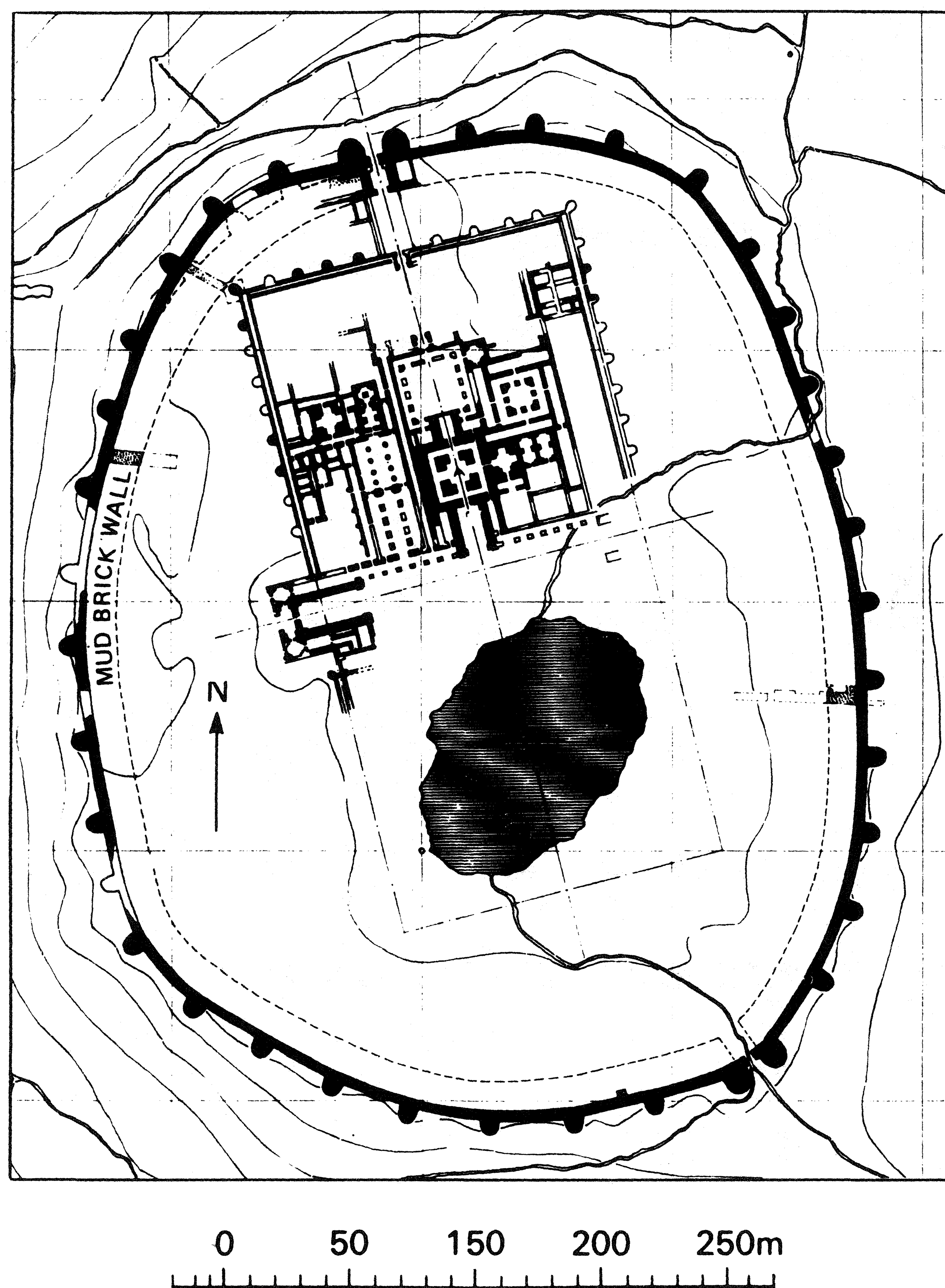


Fig. 13. Takht-i Sulaimān, site plan.

second building phase, dressed limestone was used. There is very little evidence of decoration; the most important seems to have been the niches carved in the stone above the entrance gates in the *temenos* wall.

Although not normally recognized as such, the grotto, carved in the rock of Ṭāq-i Bustān (pl. 94) represents another quite distinct and apparently unique type of religious monument. However, before taking up the discussion of it, which is essentially a work of sculpture, attention must be turned to the earlier examples of Sasanian rock carving.

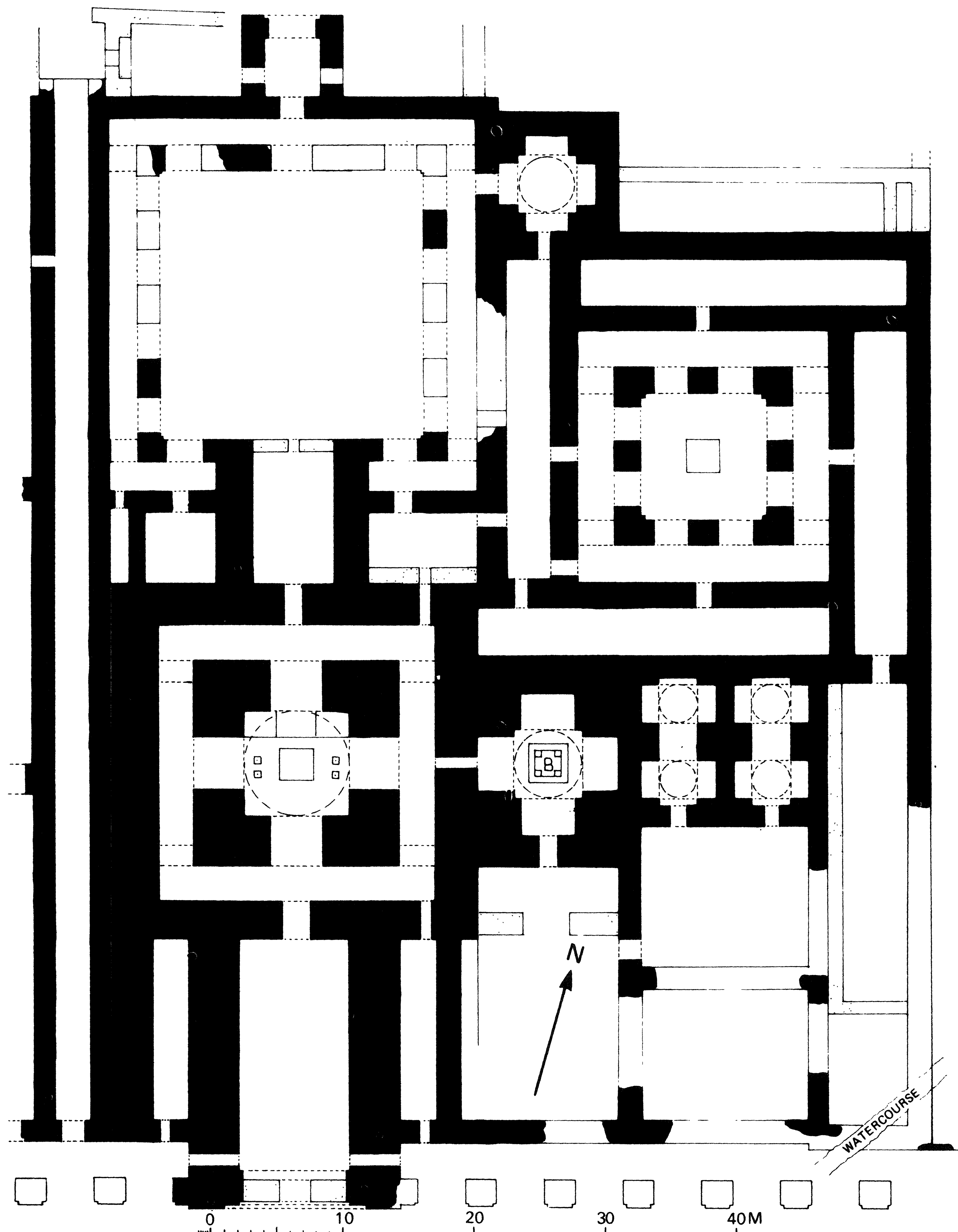


Fig. 14. Takht-i Sulaimān, temple-complex plan.

3. ROCK RELIEFS AND SCULPTURE

In a series of monumental rock reliefs the Sasanian emperors sought to glorify and immortalize their persons and their deeds. In all some twenty-nine such sculptures are known.[1] The great majority were

[1] All are listed in Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie*, pp. 240–1; the illustrations there are small but generally adequate. For better illustrations of many see the Bibliography, especially: Ghirshman (*Iran* and *Bîchâpour I*), Hinz, Hermann, and *SPA*, (pls. 154–68). Footnote references to illustrations follow for each of the reliefs discussed but not illustrated here.

carved during the first century of Sasanian rule – between A.D. 224 and 309 – and, with the exception of one at Salmās, in Azarbāījān, all of these early sculptures are located in Fārs, the homeland of the dynasty. In choosing this medium for their glorification the Sasanian rulers were perpetuating an ancient Near Eastern tradition, the origin of which is undoubtedly to be identified in the Protohistoric and Early Dynastic stelae of Mesopotamia.[1] It was under the Akkadians that such memorial stelae first reached monumental proportions[2] and it was evidently in imitation of these that the first great rock sculptures were carved. It was a contemporary of Naramsin, Annubanini, king of the Lullubi in northwestern Iran, who seems to have been the first to have thought of recording his victories in the living rock.[3] He chose for his site a great rock cliff near Sar-i Pul in Iranian Kurdistān. The Elamites, in the mountainous regions to the south, in Khūzistān and in Fārs, carried on this tradition and, as if to emulate them, various Parthian rulers had rock carvings executed at nearby sites.[4] It is probably no coincidence that Darius chose another mountainous outcrop at Bīsutūn, not far distant from Sar-i Pul, to commemorate his victory over Gaumāta.[5] Mithridates II, Gotarzes II, and another unidentified Parthian ruler, have left reliefs at the same site.[6]

As we have seen, Ardashīr built a city and a palace in Fārs, at a site today known as Fīrūzābād, before his overthrow of the Parthians in A.D. 224. It was there that he chose to commemorate this event in a great panorama carved on the walls of a rocky gorge giving access to the plain (pl. 89). His artists did not attempt to depict the actual battle but, in accordance with ancient Near Eastern traditions, treated it allegorically in the guise of a furious jousting tournament in which Ardashīr, his son Shāpūr and one of his nobles are shown just at the moment each has worsted his Parthian adversary. The carving is in rather flat relief which has often been compared with the earlier rock carvings of the Parthians with which in fact it has very little else in common. Compared to the naive "line drawings" at Tang-i Sarvak (pls. 73, 74), or the Gotarzes relief at Bīsutūn, the Fīrūzābād tourna-

[1] André Parrot, *Sumer* (London, 1960), figs. 92 and 163–6. [2] *Ibid.*, figs. 209–13.

[3] Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie*, pl. 125; Herzfeld, *Am Tor*, pls. II-IV.

[4] There is a Parthian relief at Sar-i Pul (Herzfeld, *Am Tor*, pl. XXVI); for the other Elamite and nearby Parthian rock reliefs, see Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie*, pls. 85–91 and p. 62, regarding another Parthian relief at Khung-i Naurūzī. See chap. 28 and pl. 70.

[5] Ghirshman, *Persia*, figs. 278, 282–4, and Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie*, pl. 133 a–b.

[6] Ghirshman, *Iran*, figs. 64–6; Herzfeld, *Am Tor*, pls. XXI–XXII; Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie*, pl. 133 c–d. [On the identity of Gotarzes cf. pp. 43 f and 285 f.]

ment represents an astonishing development. The costumes, headdress, weapons, and insignia of the individual figures and of their mounts are treated in great detail and, in spite of the low relief, when viewed in the glancing sunlight, there is a remarkable effect of modelling. If the sculptors have failed convincingly to solve the difficult problem of representing the fallen adversaries, the composition as a whole gives a most satisfactory impression of the fury of the combat through the violent forward movement of the onrushing Persians. The pictorial character of this great panorama, for which we have no prototype in rock carving, surely derives from mural painting.[1]

The three other important rock reliefs carved for Ardashīr are traditionally described as investiture scenes. In the two, which on the basis of style seem to be the earliest, at Fīrūzābād[2] and Naqsh-i Rajab,[3] he is shown in the company of members of his court as he receives the beribboned diadem, the divine symbol, from the hand of Ahura Mazda. In the relief at Naqsh-i Rustam (pl. 90*a*) both he and Ahura Mazda are mounted on horseback; they stand in a symmetrical arrangement as mirror images. The artist has balanced the billowing "pallium" of the god by a page, standing behind the king holding a fly switch over his head, as frequently occurs in the reliefs in Persepolis. Under the horses' feet lie the prostrate figures of Ardavān and Ahriman, the adversaries of king and god.

Even allowing for differences in the state of preservation, there is considerable difference in the quality of these three reliefs. That at Fīrūzābād is crude and rigid by comparison with the other two. Of these two, that at Naqsh-i Rustam is by far the more advanced; the figures of the latter, although still rather stiff and heraldic in pose and with a formal and patterned treatment of details, stand out in high relief and have achieved a far greater effect of modelling. In spite of these differences, it seems that all three must have been commissioned late in Ardashīr's reign; on the basis of the crowns as compared with those on his coins, which show an evolution of five essentially different types, Lukonin has attributed the Fīrūzābād and Naqsh-i Rajab standing "investitures" to the years between 235 and 240 and that at Naqsh-i Rustam to the very end of Ardashīr's reign, around 239–40.[4]

[1] As long ago conjectured by Herzfeld, *Iran*, pp. 308–9.
[2] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 167; Herzfeld, *Iran*, pl. CVIII (above).
[3] Herzfeld, *Iran*, pl. CVIII (below).
[4] "Monnaie d'Ardachir I et l'art officiel sassanide", *IA* VIII (1968), pp. 106–17.

This dating provides important evidence against the identification of these scenes of god and king on the rock reliefs – and on the coins[1] – as representing the royal investiture. It seems quite illogical for a king at the end of his reign, and particularly one whom we know transferred his power to his son considerably before his death, to have chosen this moment to record his investiture. Though there may be some logic in accepting this traditional interpretation for the reliefs where the king receives the diadem standing in the presence of his retinue, at Fīrūzābād and Naqsh-i Rajab there seems no cogent reason to do so in the case of the equestrian relief at Naqsh-i Rustam. One cannot but be impressed by the anachronism of an investiture in which king and god trample over their fallen victims – in the case of the king presumably those yet to be conquered. It has long been this writer's view that the iconography of these scenes is far less limited in scope than that of the brief historical moment of the actual investiture but that rather they are to be seen as having the broader connotation of "glorification" or royal apotheosis.[2] These so-called investiture scenes are not *scenes*; they are allegories – allegories of divine kingship.[3]

The concept of divine kingship was an ancient one in the Near East and had been adopted and elaborated upon by Alexander and his successors[4] and was evidently taken over fairly intact by the Parthians.[5] Throughout the Hellenistic world the classical symbol of Victory, the *stemma*, often transformed into a wreath, a jewelled diadem or a crown, became the emblem of this "divinity" and Niké, as goddess of victory, came to be regarded as the "cause and manifestation of all legitimate sovereignty".[6] The Parthians adopted this iconography of divine kingship in their coins (pls. 1–9) where Niké, or a Tyche as her equiva-

[1] As proposed by R. Göbl, "Investitur im sasanidischen Iran und ihre numismatische Bezeugung", *WZKM* LVI (1960), pp. 36–51.

[2] Shepherd, "The Diadem – a clue to the Religious Iconography of Sasanian Art", Paper read at the VIth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology, Oxford, England, Sept. 1972. On the symbolic nature of this investiture, see also Herzfeld, *Iran*, p. 338.

[3] [Cf. chapters 2, 9, 19, 22, 23, 29(*b*) and 32(*c*), particularly pp. 694ff, 845ff, 902ff and 1117, where the commonly accepted interpretation of the rock reliefs as symbolizing the investiture of kingship is maintained. On the origin and nature of divine kingship in Iran, cf. chapters 1, 19 and 22.]

[4] See W. W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilization* (Cleveland and New York, 1966), pp. 49–55, and the Bibliography in the footnotes there. See also Franz Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra* (New York, 1956), pp. 85–103; W. MacEwan, *The Oriental Origin of Hellenistic Kingship* (Chicago, 1934).

[5] As is attested by inscriptions on their coins; see e.g., E. T. Newell, "The Coinage of the Parthians", *SPA*, pp. 481–2.

[6] Ch. Daremberg and M. Edmond Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités grecques et romaines* (Paris, 1873–1919), *s.v.* "Victoria", pp. 830ff.

lent, is frequently represented bestowing the beribboned diadem on the king. It is important to note in this connection that already under the Parthians, on seals of the 1st century B.C. found at Nisā and on the coins of Artabanus III, the king receiving the diadem is represented on horseback.[1] On Kushān coins,[2] this function has already been taken over by Iranian gods and in the Parthian relief at Tang-i Sarvak the king is shown having just received the ring from two deities – Mithra and Anāhitā (pl. 74*a*).[3]

It would seem that Ardashīr, in adopting this iconography, sought to affirm his "divine right" to the rule which he had in fact usurped from his Parthian overlords. In Iranian iconography the diadem can be interpreted as representing the royal *xwarna*,[4] the divine Fortune or Grace, which descending from god to king consecrated his authority. In accordance with ancient Near Eastern tradition, this was for all practical purposes the equivalent of divinity itself. That Ardashīr may well have conceived it in these terms is strongly supported by the text of the inscription on the Naqsh-i Rustam relief. It makes no allusion to investiture but states candidly: "The image (is) this of the Mazda-worshipping god Ardashīr. King of Kings of Iran, who (is) a scion of the gods. The son of Pāpak, the king."[5] It would seem that in this relief, executed late in his reign, Ardashīr was more concerned with the concept of his divinity and of the divine origin of his dynasty than that of his temporal authority. He sought not only to immortalize himself but to reinforce and legitimize the position of those who were to follow him.

A prototype for this iconography of apotheosis can be seen at Persepolis on one of the door jambs of the Council Hall where the nearly full length figure of Ahura Mazda – also an anthropomorphic image of the king – hovers in a winged sun disk above the enthroned King of Kings and offers him the divine symbol.[6] At Naqsh-i Rustam, on the façade of Xerxes' tomb, a similar association of king and god can

[1] For the Nisā seals, see M. E. Masson and G. A. Pugachenkova, "Ottiski Parfianski pechatei iz Nisi", *VDI* 1954.4, figs. 38 and 45. See many variations of this motif on the coins in *SPA*, pls. 140–4; for a coin of Artabanus III, see pl. 143E.

[2] Percy Gardner, *Coins of Greek and Scythian Kings in the British Museum* (London, 1886), pls. XXVII–VIII.

[3] H. Seyrig, "Antiquités syriennes: 90. Sur un bas-relief de Tang-i Sarvak", *Syria* XLVII (1970), pp. 113–16.

[4] Cumont, *op. cit.*, pp. 93–4; J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *La Religion de l'Iran ancien* (Paris, 1962), pp. 293–300; *idem*, *Symbols and Values in Zoroastrianism* (New York, 1966), p. 123.

[5] Herzfeld, *Paikuli*, p. 85.

[6] Ghirshman, *Persia*, fig. 233; *idem*, *Iran*, p. 262, refers to these Achaemenian reliefs as the origin of the investiture scenes in Iranian art.

only be interpreted as representing the heroization of the deceased ruler.[1] At Bīsutūn,[2] where there can be no question of investiture or heroization, we have in this same theme the precise parallel to the iconography of Ardashīr's relief at Naqsh-i Rustam. There Darius, with one foot on the head of his fallen enemy, Gaumāta, and with the satraps of his great empire assembled before him, is shown receiving the diadem from Ahura Mazda. The Bīsutūn relief is the symbolic representation of apotheosis[3] through victory, a symbolism already explicit in Annubanini's relief at Sar-i Pul.[4] Surely this is what we are meant to see at Naqsh-i Rustam in Ardashīr's equestrian relief and, as we will see, in the many equestrian "investitures" and victory scenes on the reliefs of his successors.

From the long reign of Ardashīr's son, Shāpūr I, we have seven reliefs at three different sites in Fārs.[5] Of these, four represent victories over the Romans; two are equestrian "investiture" scenes similar to those of his father's at Naqsh-i Rustam, and in the seventh he is shown on horseback followed on foot by a group of dignitaries.

Except for its obvious stylistic development and the omission of the conquered enemy under the horse's hooves, the equestrian relief at Naqsh-i Rajab (pl. 90*b*) is almost identical to that of his father. In the second "investiture" relief, at Bishāpūr,[6] his horse now tramples on the fallen Gordion and there is the added figure of the suppliant Philip kneeling before him. Once again we have a clear statement of the ruler's "apotheosis through victory". This is equally true of the more elaborate iconographic programmes of the four remaining victory monuments.

In the victory relief at Dārābgird, the earliest of the series, Shāpūr wears his father's crown.[7] From this it has been assumed that it represents an early exploit during the period of his joint rule or in the following interval before his actual coronation in A.D. 242, at which time he would have assumed his own crown. The presence of three defeated Romans in this scene is difficult to explain in the light of the

[1] Sarre and Herzfeld, *Felsreliefs*, pl. III; a much better illustration is in Pope, *Architecture*, pl. 30 (there erroneously identified as Darius' tomb). [2] See n. 5, p. 1078.

[3] [The texts of Darius's inscriptions, however, while stressing that kingship was granted him by Ahura Mazdā, do not mention his own apotheosis.]

[4] See n. 3, p. 1078; on a famous seal of Darius in the British Museum (Ghirshman, *Persia*, fig. 329) there is another version of this iconography of "apotheosis through victory".

[5] On these monuments, see especially Ghirshman, *Bīchāpour I*, pp. 45–185.

[6] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 202; *idem*, *Bīchāpour I*, pl. XI; *SPA*, pl. 155B.

[7] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 206, and *Bīchāpour I*, pls. XXIII–XXV.

known historical events.[1] The identification of Gordion III, who was slain in battle in 243, and Philip the Arab, who sued for peace in 244, on the Bīshāpūr "investiture" relief,[2] permits the dating of that monument not long after 244 and a third conquered Roman, Valerian, whom Shāpūr took prisoner "with his own hands"[3] in the battle of Edessa, A.D. 260, provides at least a *terminus post quem* for the two victory reliefs at Bīshāpūr (pl. 91) and that at Naqsh-i Rustam.[4] The two remaining reliefs can only be dated on the basis of stylistic comparison with the others.

Of the Dārābgird relief, aside from the crown, there are many features which support its claim to an early date. Ghirshman[5] sees the many new aspects of this monument, in both style and composition, as the direct result of Roman influence resulting from Shāpūr's contacts with the Romans and the many Roman prisoners at his disposal. He convincingly shows that in many ways the composition, the elaboration and the arrangement of the figures and their attitudes and gestures are derived from Roman imperial iconography. The degree to which Roman influence may be claimed for the stylistic evolution, the genesis of which is already apparent in the equestrian relief of Ardashīr at Naqsh-i Rustam, is less certain.

Unfortunately, there is so little left of the terribly eroded Bīshāpūr relief of 244, the most precisely dated of the series, that no stylistic judgement is possible. In the Naqsh-i Rajab relief of Shāpūr and his retinue,[6] the modelling of the figures and the new soft treatment of the rippling folds of Shāpūr's garments show considerable advance over that already observed at Dārābgird, but there is an element of restraint that suggests a date before 260 for this relief.

It is in the three reliefs in which Valerian is depicted, i.e., those which can be dated after 260, that the full development of Sasanian sculptural style can be said to have been attained (pl. 91). To these, the Naqsh-i Rajab equestrian relief of Shāpūr and Ahura Mazda (pl. 90*b*) may be

[1] For the most recent and convincing identification of the principals in this relief as Mariades, Gordion III and Philip the Arab, see Ghirshman, *Bichāpour I*, pp. 91–123.

[2] On the identification of the Romans, see MacDermot, "Roman Emperors".

[3] As stated by Shāpūr in his inscription on the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht at Naqsh-i Rustam: "The emperor Valerian we made prisoner ourselves with our own hands." See Maricq, "Res gestae", p. 312 and also the Bibliography there for other translations and discussions of this inscription.

[4] For illustrations of the other two victory reliefs, see Ghirshman, *Iran*, figs. 200 and 204–5; and *Bichāpour I*, pls. XV and XXVI, 2, and *SPA*, pl. 155A, and 158.

[5] *Bichāpour I*, pp. 147–63.

[6] *SPA*, pl. 154B.

added on stylistic grounds. In all of these reliefs, at least in the principal figures on which we may assume the master sculptors worked, there is a new vigour and vitality that has not been seen before. The relief is higher and there is a greater freedom and variety of composition. In the three victory scenes, although the subject and the principals are the same, different solutions for the interrelationship of the figures and the overall composition have been found. There is an increased interest in detail and richness in decoration, and an elaboration and lavishness in the treatment of the folds of the diaphanous garments which has only been hinted at before. These billowing garments effectively suggest the forward motion of figures approaching one another from opposite directions. If one cannot speak of action, there is a very satisfying sense of arrested motion; one can easily imagine that Shāpūr's horse has suddenly stopped as the desperate Philip rushes forward to beg for mercy.

The success of these sculptures cannot be judged (as too often has been the case) in terms of classical standards. The artists, unlike their Western counterparts, were not concerned with realism – in form or motion. They were adhering to time-honoured Eastern concepts in which all stress is placed on symbolic values. The disproportionately large figure of Shāpūr which dominates the entire scene of the Bishāpūr victory over Valerian (pl. 91) only serves to heighten the aura of power and divine glory that the artist sought to express. It is only logical that the defeated Valerian standing at his side should be reduced to less than normal proportions. These anomalies have been brought together so skilfully, however, that unless one analyses the scene carefully from the point of view of art criticism, one is not easily aware of them. One's attention is drawn to the powerful figure of Shāpūr and all else is of secondary importance. This was the artist's purpose. If a work of art can be judged by the success with which the artist accomplished his purpose, then this is great sculpture, indeed.

The developments we have just seen in the sculpture of Shāpūr's reign perhaps reached their ultimate expression in the superb equestrian apotheosis of Bahrām I at Bīshāpur (pl. 92) and another of similar quality, only a few yards away on the same rock wall, in which Bahrām II is represented receiving the submission of the Arabs (pl. 93*a*).[1] Bahrām II commissioned a number of other reliefs at widely scattered sites, but of these only two, at Naqsh-i Rustam and at Sar Mashhad

[1] Herzfeld, *Iran*, pl. CXXII; *SPA*, pl. 156B.

(pl. 93*b*), continue this high level of sculptural quality.[1] Under the succeeding rulers we begin to recognize signs of decline as in the disproportinate and bulky figures of Narseh's standing investiture, at Naqsh-i Rustam.[2] Carved under Hormizd II, at the same site, is a series of jousting scenes,[3] obviously inspired by the tournament at Fīrūzābād, which in their sculptural treatment seem to hark back to Ardashīr's equestrian apotheosis at this same site. For all of the long reign of Shāpūr II (309–79) there is only one grossly provincial work surviving in a complete state, and another unfinished.[4] The flame started under Ardashīr, which burned so brightly for the next half century, slowly began to burn out in the last decades of the 3rd century and all but died under Shāpūr II. After a brief flicker in the reigns of Ardashīr II and Shāpūr III, at the end of the 4th century, when each had a relief carved at Ṭāq-i Bustān[5] far to the north, this flame died out altogether. The fire was not to be rekindled for more than two hundred years when Khusrau II[6] chose Ṭāq-i Bustān as the site for a sacred grotto (pl. 94).[7]

Here on the precipitous rock wall overlooking the little lake had been carved the reliefs of Ardashīr II and Shāpūr III. Ardashīr's relief followed the usual convention in which the figures were framed in a rectangular field carved out of the rock surrounding the figures. But Shāpūr broke with this tradition and had a small grotto, in the shape of a barrel vaulted aivān, cut out of the rock; on the back wall were carved his figure and that of his father standing side by side. In choosing the same site for his monument, Khusrau II, evidently inspired by this architectural concept, determined to elaborate upon it by having another, larger, aivān carved next to it. Although never finished, a third aivān, to complete the illusion of a triple aivān building was evidently planned.[8]

In keeping with this architectural concept an elaborate decorative programme was developed for the façade. At either side are two great "pilasters", decorated with acanthus leaves, which seem to carry an

[1] Ghirshman, *Iran*, figs. 212–13 and 215–17; the others are at Barm-i Dilak, Naqsh-i Bahrām, and Gūyum – see Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie*, pls. 73, 82a, and 83.

[2] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 218; *SPA*, pl. 157B.

[3] Ghirshman, *Iran*, figs. 219–20; Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie*, pls. 29–30.

[4] Ghirshman, *Iran*, figs. 225–6; *idem*, "Notes iraniennes III", figs. 8 and 13.

[5] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 233; Herzfeld, *Am Tor*, pls. XXIX–XXXII; *SPA*, pl. 160A.

[6] [Cf. p. 891, n. 5 concerning the attribution.]

[7] Herzfeld, *Am Tor*, pls. XXVII–XXVIII, XXXI–LI; *SPA*, pls. 159–68; for superb illustrations and many details, see the two volumes published by Tokyo University (full reference in the Bibliography).

[8] Herzfeld, *Am Tor*, p. 71.

impost from which "springs" the archivolt. The latter is decorated with an enormous diadem like those worn by the kings and received from the gods in the earlier rock reliefs. Above the upturned ends of the flying ribbons which terminate the diadem, two great winged angels float in the spandrels of the arch. They have clearly been inspired by the classical Victories of Roman triumphal arches.[1] They each hold diadems of the familiar form in one hand and a bowl of fruit in the other.

Inside the grotto on the back wall are two seemingly unrelated motifs. They are separated by a plinth "carried" on columns carved in the rock at the two corners. Above in the tympanum, standing on small pedestals which are supported by the plinth, are the figures of a familiar "investiture" scene (pl. 95). But here the king receives not one diadem, but two – one from the hand of Ahura Mazda, who stands on his left, and another from Anāhitā on the right. Beneath, giving the illusion of standing in front of the architectural support of this group, is a monumental sculpture of a mail-clad knight on horseback whose head is framed by a great halo. The two side walls, below the "springing" of the vault, are covered with elaborately detailed and beautifully composed hunting scenes which take place in an enclosed *paradeisos* (pl. 96). Before the grotto once stood a small *aedicula* on four columns under the protection of which stood a statue of Khusrau II. The capitals and a fragment of the sculpture still survive.[2]

Khusrau's monument at Ṭāq-i Bustān is one of the most complete and important monuments of Sasanian art to have come down to us. However, in spite of the fact that a considerable art historical literature has accrued concerning it, the totality of its concept has not been recognized and its meaning never fully interpreted.[3] Traditionally, it has been regarded as a miniature pleasure palace in which the principal motifs were the king's investiture; his portrait, as a knight on his favourite steed; hunting scenes, representing the royal pleasures and pastimes; and the ornament on the façade was thought to be just that. If one takes these motifs literally, this in a sense is true; however, the real meaning goes very much deeper.

The clue to the iconography of Ṭāq-i Bustān is provided by the great diadem which frames the arch and is repeated in the hands of the angels

[1] See for example the victories in the arch of Septimius Severus in the Roman Forum: Theodor Kraus, *Das Römische Weltreich*, (Berlin, 1967), pl. 46.

[2] Herzfeld, *Am Tor*, pp. 100–1, pls. LIIB and LV–LIX; according to Vanden Berghe (*Archéologie*, p. 105), this sculpture was still there (1959) set up on the dam.

[3] See the literature under Ṭāq-i Bustān in the Bibliography.

in the spandrels, by those which the deities in the tympanum and on the capitals proffer to the king and, of course, it is the principal element of the crowns worn by king and gods.[1] The rôle of the diadem as a divine symbol in the Sasanian "investiture" reliefs has long been recognized,[2] but its equation with the xwarna has only recently come to be appreciated.[3] In this light the diadem can no longer be regarded as just a symbol of divine authority but can be taken as having a broader connotation of royal apotheosis.[4]

At Ṭāq-i Bustān, not only the symbolic investiture scene on the back wall but the entire grotto is to be so interpreted. Khusrau's "Divine Destiny" is doubly symbolized in the investiture scene and by his rôle as the "Victorious Emperor" on the great horse Shabdēz;[5] here the halo about the king's head is but another symbol of the xwarna. The hunting scenes correspond to the celestial scenes of hunting, fighting and banqueting, in which this same king had himself portrayed amidst "the sky, the stars, the signs of the zodiac and the seven climes" on the heavenly dome over his famous cosmic throne, *takht-i ṭāqdīs*.[6] The latter, we know from many historical sources,[7] was located in the palace of Shīz, the great religious centre today known as Takht-i Sulaimān (pl. 88*b*), which has been described above. The sacred character of Ṭāq-i Bustān becomes apparent when we consider the iconographic programme as a whole. The selection of the site, close to a sacred water-source, can scarcely have been a coincidence. We are reminded too sharply of the Avestan "holy water spring", Ardvī Sūrā Anāhitā; and Anāhitā is everywhere at Ṭāq-i Bustān.[8] But the confirmation of its sacred character is proven by the singularly important rôle given the great diadem which frames the arch itself. It consecrates the entire grotto and informs us that this is a sacred place.

The figures of gods and king in the tympanum group and the equestrian figure below are in much higher relief than those in any of the earlier rock sculptures. However, in their sculptural quality they show no

[1] See pp. 1081ff and n. 4, p. 1081.
[2] Herzfeld, *Iran*, p. 338.
[3] See n. 1 above.
[4] Cf. however, p. 1080.
[5] See A. Grabar, *L'Empereur dans l'art Byzantin* (Paris, 1936), esp. pages 45–54, regarding this same iconography in Byzantine art.
[6] This heavenly dome is described in numerous early sources; the references were first brought together and discussed by Herzfeld, "Der Thron des Khosrō"; for other discussions of it, see under "Iconography" in the Bibliography to this chapter: Lehmann (pp. 24–5); L'Orange (pp. 18–26) and Saxl (pp. 102–21); also Christensen, *op. cit.* (pp. 466–9).
[7] Brought together by Herzfeld, "Der Thron des Khosrō".
[8] Regarding her many manifestations there, see Shepherd, "The Iconography of Anahita", pp. 3619–20.

advancement over the work produced at this same site more than two hundred years before. In striving for monumentality, the artist has succeeded only in achieving bulk. But it is evident here, as throughout Khusrau's work at Ṭāq-i Bustān, the principal concern was not with sculpture but with symbolism and decoration. The artists were not primarily creating sculpture; they were decorating a building. There is a concern with decorative motifs and minutiae of detail not known before in Sasanian sculpture. Every detail of costume, including delicate textile patterns, has been meticulously recorded (pl. 111*c*). The precision of the details of the jewelry, the elaborate crowns, the diadems, and the belt and sword of the king, give the impression of having been carved by a goldsmith rather than a stone-carver. A number of swords with gold or silver hilts and scabbards (pl. 107*d*) found in recent years in Iran, confirm the interdependence of these two arts.[1] Similarly, the ewer from which Anāhitā pours out a libation (pl. 95) can be closely paralleled among the recently found silver vessels.[2] Many of the decorative elements, such as the beautiful acanthus leaves that decorate the pilasters on the face of the aivān and the palmettos and other floral and decorative motifs on the capitals of the *aedicula* which stood before it, are closely allied in style and in the form and technique of the carving to the ornament on contemporary silver. This most important medium of Sasanian decorative art is treated in a separate section of this chapter by Prudence Oliver Harper.

In their composition and pictorial concept, the hunting scenes on the walls of the grotto most surely reflect the influence of contemporary mosaics and paintings, such as those which the historians have recorded as having once existed at Ctesiphon and Shīz.[3] As confirmation of the historical sources we have only the meagre evidence of vestiges of frescoes – now irretrievable – in the baths of the villa at al-Maʿriḍ (Ctesiphon) and at the Aivān-i Karkhā, and the actual, but very incomplete fragments, from Susa and Dāmghān.[4] These scanty clues, together with the sparse historical testimony, the fragments of early

[1] See p. 1103 and n. 6.

[2] See, for example, the ewer in Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Museum of Art, *Sasanian silver*, no. 44.

[3] See p. 1064 n. 1 and p. 1087 n. 6; as noted by Reuther (*SPA*, p. 532) Ammianus Marcellinus also records frescoes of hunting scenes in a summer palace near Ctesiphon.

[4] On the Ctesiphon frescoes, see Kühnel, *op. cit.*, p. 25; Schmidt, "L'Expédition", pp. 18–19, and Reuther, *SPA*, pp. 532–3. For the Susa and Aivān-i Karkhā paintings, see Ghirshman, *Mémoires de la Mission*, pp. 8–9 and 11–12, and *idem*, *Iran*, fig. 224. For the paintings at Dāmghān, see Schmidt, *Tepe Hissar*, pp. 327 and 331, fig. 175.

Islamic fresco painting at Nīshāpūr,[1] and the surviving mural paintings of Sasanian and early Islamic date in the countries on the eastern and western borders, leave no doubt that this art must also have been widely practised in Iran. It undoubtedly had much in common with the strongly Iranianized paintings which have almost miraculously survived in the Sogdian monuments at Balalyk Tepe, Varakhsha, Panjikent and Afrāsiyāb (pl. 110*a*).[2] One can but hope that future archaeological work in Iran will throw yet more light on this now virtually unrecorded art of Sasanian Iran. The mosaics found at Bishāpūr, unfortunately, do not help us in this respect. They cannot be regarded as Iranian art but are direct imports from the West.[3] In subject, in style, and in technique they are Roman work and were almost certainly executed by Roman craftsmen – probably recruited from among the ranks of Shāpūr's thousands of Roman prisoners.

The situation with respect to sculpture in the round is only very little better than for painting. In stone, we have only the colossal figure of Shāpūr I which was cut in a living pillar of rock in the entrance to a cave near Bishāpūr (pl. 97), on the one hand, and on the other a few miniature pieces in semi-precious stone (pl. 104). In its general style, in sculptural treatment and in the details of costume, crown and jewelry, the great Bishāpūr figure follows closely that of the same king on the rock reliefs (pls. 90*b*, 91). However, here as a natural result of the limitations imposed on the sculptor by the circumstances, the sculpture is stiff and hieratic. But it has been executed with great competence to fit it into the proscribed space and there is an elegance in the treatment of the great torso and a commanding presence in the strong face. Now re-erected, it still succeeds – in spite of its newly-added makeshift legs – in making an awesome impression, and surely this was the aim and purpose of the sculptor. The only other monumental stone sculpture to have survived, the mutilated torso from the statue of Khusrau II that stood under the baldachin before the great aivān of Ṭāq-i Bustān, is too damaged to give any impression of its original sculptural quality.[4]

[1] W. Hauser, *et al.* "The Īrānian Expedition, 1937" and "The Īrānian Expedition, 1938–40", in *BMMA* XXXIII (November, 1938), pp. 3–23, figs. 4–8, and XXXVII (April, 1942), pp. 83–119, figs. 3, 28–9 and 45–6.

[2] There is an extensive literature in Russian on these monuments; see the Bibliography, Chapter 30. For a selection of the paintings and a discussion in English, see Mario Bussagli, *Painting of Central Asia* (Geneva, 1963); A. Belenitsky, *Asie Centrale* (Geneva, 1968); and see pp. 1144ff of this volume, and pls. 138–144.

[3] Ghirshman, *Iran*, pls. 180–6 and *Bichāpour II*, pp. 38–148, pls. A–B and V–XV.

[4] See n. 2, p. 1086.

That such sculptures must have been more common than the surviving evidence demonstrates is suggested by the votive monument which Roman Ghirshman unearthed at Bishāpūr.[1] There, before fragments of a pair of votive columns in Roman tradition, is the socle for a statue and on either side of it the bases of two stone fire altars. From the inscription on one of the columns, we know that a statue of Shāpūr I stood on the socle.

From the reign of Narseh, at the end of the 3rd century, there are the remains of stone busts from the memorial tower erected by that ruler at Pāikulī, not far from Kirmānshāh.[2] According to Herzfeld's[3] study of the remains, the monument itself served no other purpose than to provide a surface for the commemorative inscription. The four "portrait" busts were attached directly to the otherwise undecorated masonry façades. Although badly damaged and of themselves shedding little light on our knowledge of Sasanian stone sculpture in the round, they are important in that they provide evidence of a Sasanian taste, similar to that of the Romans, for the use of "portrait" busts in an architectural setting. The similar use of such busts has been noted above, at Kish, and there are others from the ruins of a palace at Niẓāmābād in the Berlin Museum and one of unknown provenance in the Art Institute of Chicago.[4]

It seems probable that a number of "royal" busts in silver and bronze, which have appeared on the market in recent years as part of the wave of "fortuitous" finds in the Dailamān region, may originally have had a similar function. In these media, however, it is logical of course to assume their use would have been limited to interiors. There is a group of at least five busts in bronze, about half-life-size, which filtered out onto the market at about the same time, in the early 1950s. One has been acquired by the Louvre (pl. 98*b*); the others all apparently remain in the limbo of the art market or have passed into private hands.[5] They may be presumed to be of the same provenance which in two instances, at least, is claimed to have been Lajvard in Māzandarān.[6] Although similar, there are substantial differences between them, and

[1] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 194.

[2] Herzfeld, *Paikuli*, plates 7–9 and figs. 8–9, *SPA*, fig. 164.

[3] Herzfeld, *Paikuli*, p. 32.

[4] See *SPA*, pl. 178, and Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 228.

[5] A. Parrot, *Syria* xxx (1953), pp. 5–9, pls. IV–V, and *idem*, *Syria*, xxxii (1955), pp. 308–9, pls. XXII–XXIV. A third example in the Borowski collection is illustrated in Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 269 (as is also the one in the Louvre, fig. 267); the fourth and finest of the series is illustrated in Ann Arbor, *Sasanian silver*, no. 55. The fifth bust remains unpublished.

[6] Parrot, *Syria* xxx, p. 6, n. 1 and xxxii, p. 308.

each was obviously cast separately by the lost wax process. In each case, the bust rises from a leafy calyx in precisely the same fashion as that which has long been known from a small Parthian bronze in the Berlin Museum.[1] In discussing the Louvre bronze and, later, one in a dealer's possession, André Parrot[2] conjectured – even knowing only the two – that they might have been used in an architectural setting. The five known to the writer strongly suggest comparison with the fourteen stucco busts from Kish which would seem to support this hypothesis.

In silver, there are at least three busts, of which the "Portrait of a King" in the Metropolitan Museum of Art[3] is the largest and the finest. Another is in the Freer Gallery of Art[4] (pl. 98*a*) and the third was seen by the writer a few years ago on the art market. Again, the fact that the three seem to have appeared more or less simultaneously suggests a common provenance and the possibility that at one time they may have served together within the same "architectural" or decorative complex. Although the Metropolitan Museum and the Freer Gallery busts are both damaged and incomplete, the third, which has fortunately been preserved intact, confirms the fact that all three were, indeed, only busts attached to a socle or support of some other material. In this case the lower edge, which is neatly finished off at a point comparable with the lower edge of the Freer bust and of the bronzes, has a series of holes of which some still retain the original silver nails by which it was fastened to the support; judging by the size and character of the nails, this must have been of a soft material such as wood.

The sculptural quality of the Metropolitan Museum of Art bust is undeniably finer than the other two and they in turn are quite different from each other. There are, however, certain technical and stylistic features which relate the three and add to the plausibility of their original association. The most obvious feature that relates the three is the excessively broad flat neck that in the frontal plane is almost flush with the chin and extends laterally almost the full width of the elaborate coiffure. Since these silver busts have been raised in the repoussé technique, it is possible to see this as a technical requirement of the silversmith who needed a sufficiently large opening to manipulate his

[1] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 108; *SPA*, pl. 134C. [2] Parrot, *Syria* XXXII, p. 309.

[3] P. O. Harper, "Portrait of a King", *BMMA* XXV (November, 1966), pp. 137–51; here also the possible use in an architectural setting has been suggested.

[4] Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, *Exhibition of 2500 Years of Persian Art* (Washington, D.C., 1971), no. 44.

tools in hammering out the details of the head and face. We know from other objects, however, within what limits the Sasanian silversmiths could work, and moreover, this same, most unnatural and unaesthetic, feature is present in the cast bronzes where there is no such technical problem. This fact suggests a common stylistic prototype and that the bronzes may well be contemporary with the silver.

Unfortunately, the crowns on none of the busts are accurate by the standards of those on the coins for any king. If we accept the coin crowns as evidence for dating other works of art – a procedure which increasingly appears to be dubious – the crown of the Freer Gallery of Art bust cannot be earlier, or other than that of Ardashīr III, who ruled briefly in 628. On the coins, this is the only crown in which there is a frontal crenellation with a superimposed crescent.[1] This is, of course, actually the same as the Metropolitan Museum of Art crown; the great ball which there fills the entire top of the crown is closely allied to the spherical striated globe on the Freer crown as well as to those on many of the earlier coins.[2] The third, unpublished, silver bust has a great winged crown with all of the essential features, including the ovoid striated globe, of the Louvre and the two related bronzes. They are similar to the crowns on a number of silver plates, for example the famous hunting plate in the Bibliothèque Nationale[3] and the Tcherdyne plate in the Hermitage.[4] The basic elements of all of these crowns can be traced back to Pērōz I (457–83),[5] a date to which the silver plates have generally been assigned. However, the way in which the wings rise high above the rest of the crown and spread widely out comes closer to the treatment of the wings on the coin crowns of Khusrau II and several of his successors.[6] It finds its closest parallel, however, not on his coins but on the crowns he wears in the sculptures at Ṭāq-i Bustān, in the "investiture" relief (pl. 95) and on the capitals. Of the two other bronzes, only the fourth one[7] has a complete crown; it is very similar to the king's crown on the banqueting plate in the Walters Art Gallery, which has frequently been compared to that on the

[1] Supposing Göbl's interpretation of this crown to be correct; see also "Aufbau der Münzprägung" in F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, *Ein Asiatischer Staat* I (Wiesbaden, 1954), drawing on unnumbered page. For an illustration of an Ardashīr III coin with this crown, see pl. 29(3).

[2] P. 135, fig. 1 (from Shāpūr III onward).

[3] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 252; *SPA*, pl. 214.

[4] Lukonin, *Persia II*, pl. 143.

[5] See n. 2 above.

[6] On the problems of dating these crowns, see Herzfeld, "Khusrau Parwez und der Ṭāq-i-Vastan", *AMI* IX (Berlin, 1938), pp. 91–158. Herzfeld dates them to Khusrau II.

[7] See n. 5, p. 1090.

coins of Yazdgard II, but it can as easily be likened to one of those on the coins of Ardashīr III (pl. 29(3)).[1]

On the whole, the evidence points to a late date for this series of busts in silver and bronze. They probably should be assigned to the very end of the Sasanian period, although judging from the evidence of the Dailamān finds as a whole, an early post-Sasanian date cannot be ruled out, as André Parrot has already remarked in connection with two of the bronzes.[2] In any event, they may be regarded as pure examples of late Sasanian art. They provide the most eloquent evidence we have of the quality and character of Sasanian figural sculpture. As with the rock reliefs, they cannot be judged in terms of classical sculpture; their creators were not interested in realism, in life and movement; they were concerned with symbolism. They sought not to record what a king actually looked like, which, as we know in the case of Roman sculpture, can often be most disillusioning; they sought instead to show what a king *should* look like. These busts in bronze and silver were not intended as portraits of the king; they were symbols of kings and perhaps as such were intended to represent the xwarna, the Divine Grace, with which he was imbued. The question of the extent to which they may be regarded as having represented royal personages at all is one which cannot be properly answered at the present time and must be left in abeyance.

Aside from pure sculpture, there are a number of silver vessels, primarily rhyta, which although theoretically utilitarian in purpose, are essentially works of sculpture. In some cases these vessels constitute only the head of an animal, as for example, the long famous saiga heads, two of which can be seen at the Metropolitan Museum of Art,[3] the horse head rhyton in Cincinnati,[4] and a similar one in the Walters Art Gallery.[5] To these can be added the head of the "dog-bird" that

[1] For the Walters Art Gallery plate, see Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 259; for the crown, see p. 135, fig. 1, the "a" crown.

[2] Parrot, *Syria* XXXII, p. 9.

[3] The one found in Poland (P. Bieńkowski, "O skarbie srebrnym z Choniakowa na Wolyniu [Dépôt d'objets d'argent de Choniakow en Volhynie]", *Swiatowit* [Annuaire du Musée Archéologique Erazme Majewski de la Société des Sciences et des Lettres de Varsovie] XIII (1929), pp. 148–81; S. Przeworski, *Syria* XII (1931), pp. 291–2, fig. 4; *SPA*, p. 355, pl. 109) now belongs to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Ann Arbor, *op. cit.*, no. 48). The other, found in Iran, belongs to the Quennol collection (Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 263a). Both were published by Ghirshman, "Notes iraniennes XI: Le rhyton en Iran", *Artibus Asiae* XXV (1962), pp. 57–80.

[4] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 263b.

[5] *The Walters Art Gallery Annual Report . . . for the Year 1966.* Front cover illustration (colour).

Camilla Trever has cleverly identified as part of a military standard.[1] The sculptural quality of each of these objects is superb; they have been adapted to suit the requirements of the vessel shape without losing anything of their strength or power. In the case of the Cincinnati rhyton, although the horse's head has been fully subordinated to the shape of the vessel, it remains an incredibly convincing sculpture. In the rhyton in the form of a recumbent horse in the Cleveland Museum of Art (pl. 99), the artist has done just the contrary; there, concerned more with pure sculptural concepts of volume and form, he has subordinated the shape of the vessel to that of the animal. He has achieved thereby an extremely fine equine sculpture, which in its monumentality as well as style compares with the finest of the great chargers on the rock reliefs. That it is not just a horse, but perhaps one of divine symbolism, is indicated by the two male busts in the phalerae on the shoulders. One offers a diadem to the other after the fashion of the iconography of "investiture" as we have seen it on those same reliefs. Both the stylistic relationship of the horse to those on the reliefs and the strong Parthian style of the male busts (cf. pl. 69) suggest an early date for the rhyton which can probably be safely assigned to the 3rd century.[2] Another fine example of equine sculpture is the silver horse head in the Louvre.[3] This head, like the royal busts, seems to have been mounted by means of rivets or nails on a body or support of another material; it may well have served as a finial on a furniture-part.[4]

Sasanian sculpture in the round is further represented by a number of small bronzes, which like the silver, have often been designed for utilitarian purposes. The most well-known example is the small equestrian incense burner in the Hermitage (pl. 100*a*). There are several bronze "throne" legs with animal, or rather mythical animal, protomes. The finest are a pair which was divided between the Stoclet and the David-Weill collections; that of the latter has recently been acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (pl. 100*b*).[5] These bronze throne legs

[1] C. Trever, "Serebrianoe navershie sasanidskovo shtandarta", *Trudy Otdela Vostoka* III (1940), pp. 167–80, and Lukonin, *Persia II*, pl. 166.

[2] D. Shepherd, "Two Silver Rhyta", *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* LIII (October, 1966), pp. 289–311; Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 262.

[3] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 243.

[4] See below, chapter 29(*b*).

[5] Published together in *SPA*, fig. 240B–C; R. Ettinghausen, "Outstanding Recent Accessions", *MMAB* XXX (1971–72), p. 94; P. O. Harper, *The Royal Hunter, the Art of the Sasanian Empire* [exhibition catalogue] (New York, Asia House, 1978), no. 35. Another somewhat similar leg is in the Louvre (cf. Amiet, in *Revue du Louvre* XVII (1967), fig. 16); there is one more in the Walters Art Gallery (Richard Ettinghausen, "Sasanian and Islamic Metalwork in Baltimore", *Apollo* LXXXIV (Dec. 1966), fig. 1).

recall very closely those on thrones of Sasanian kings as we know them from representations on many Sasanian objects, particularly several silver plates[1] and the rock crystal of the "Cup of Khusrau" in the Bibliothèque Nationale (pl. 107*a*). Again, with this feature which obviously relates to the iconography of the cosmic chariot, we are confronted with another instance of the Sasanian concern with the concept of apotheosis.[2] The style of the lion griffon in the British Museum (pl. 100*c*), said to have been found near the Helmand River and often attributed to Bactria,[3] is so close to that of the griffons of the Stoclet-Metropolitan Museum throne legs that it would seem that it, too, must surely be classed as an Iranian work of art. Among the small ornamental bronzes, there are some representing "royal" figures such as the "handle" which has long been known in the collection of the Berlin Museum.[4] Another has been more recently acquired by the Abegg-Stiftung Bern. Finally, there is a series of bronze maces of which the pommels of several are in the form of female heads which follow closely the iconography of the "Anāhitā" figures on the silver vessels.[5]

Aside from the great rupestral reliefs and the fragmentary bas reliefs from the second palace at Bīshāpūr which have been mentioned above, there is only one important bas relief in stone and some small fragments of others and a broken *astōdān* from Bīshāpūr to illustrate what must have been another important and otherwise lost form of Sasanian art. Apparently several fragments, carved in alabaster, were found together at Ctesiphon with the animal-combat group which is now in the Metropolitan Museum.[6] These relatively simple sculptures were believed by Schmidt to have been used as inlays in the stucco wall decoration. If this is true, it would seem, to this writer, that they may well have been re-used from a damaged alabaster revetment from an earlier phase of the building. The only bas relief which represents the highest level of Sasanian relief sculpture, as it is known on the rock reliefs and the silver vessels, is the round alabaster plaque with a hunting scene in Cleveland (pl. 101*a*). It is said to have been found near

[1] For example, the famous "Investiture" plate in the British Museum and the plate from Strelka in the Hermitage (*SPA*, pls. 239A–B).

[2] L'Orange, *Studies*, discusses this iconography, pp. 72ff.

[3] Dalton, *Treasure of the Oxus*, no. 194, pl. XXV.

[4] Sarre, *Kunst des Alten Persien*, fig. 15.

[5] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 268; two others, both with female heads of much finer sculptural quality than the published example, were until recently at least, on the market; there are two other related maces with different pommels in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (*MMAB* XXVI (Oct. 1967), pp. 51–2).

[6] *SPA*, pl. 170B; see Schmidt, "L'Expédition", p. 17.

Sārī in 1954, together with a silver plate, now in the Tehran Museum (pl. 101*b*), with which it is very closely related in style.[1] The royal "portraits" on these two objects are so close to that of Ardashīr II in the relief at Ṭāq-i Bustān (pl. 101*c*) – even to the unique little curl at the temple – that it would seem they can safely be assigned to the period of his rule. By comparison, the sculpture of the Bīshāpūr astōdān[2] is an extremely crude and "provincial" work.

Stucco was another important medium of relief sculpture in the Sasanian period. Although purely decorative motifs – floral and geometric forms[3] – predominated, there was also an extensive use of figural forms – both animal and human – often in very high relief and sometimes, as in the case of the busts at Kish (pl. 87), almost in the full round.[4] Although this technique of architectural decoration had been in use in Mesopotamia, at least, from early Parthian times,[5] it seems to have been used with considerable restraint in the early Sasanian period as is evidenced by the decoration at Fīrūzābād (pl. 82*a*) and Bīshāpūr (pl. 82*b*). It was not until relatively late, judging by the surviving evidence, that the extensive use of elaborate stucco decoration came into general use. The close similarity of all the stucco, across the whole northern part of the empire from Kish and Ctesiphon in the west to Dāmaghān in the east, and the relationship of many of the motifs to those at Ṭāq-i Bustān confirm the late date and the probability that a single school of craftsmen was responsible for this apparently sudden outburst of stucco decoration. By the very nature of the material and the "mass production" methods of casting in moulds by which most of them were made, these stucco reliefs rarely qualify for comparison with works of art in other media. There are among them, however, occasional pieces which rise above the normal level and can truly be considered as works of art. One such example is the superb little dancer from Ctesiphon (pl. 102), now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Large-scale equestrian figures, of which fragments are preserved in Berlin (pl. 103*a*) and New York, give an impression of the monumentality that could be achieved in this medium. The panel from Chāl Ṭarkhān

[1] Shepherd, "Sasanian Art in Cleveland", pp. 66–73. On the silver plate, see Ghirshman, *Iran*, figs. 248–51, and "Notes iraniennes VI: Une coupe sassanide à scène de chasse", *Artibus Asiae* XVIII (1955), pp. 4–19.

[2] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 210, and *idem*, "Études iraniennes II: Un ossuaire en pierre sculptée", *Artibus Asiae* XI (1948), pp. 292–310.

[3] J. Baltrusaitis in *SPA*, pp. 601ff.

[4] A. U. Pope in *SPA*, pp. 631ff.

[5] Debevoise, "The Origin of Decorative Stucco", *American Journal of Archaeology* (Supplement) XLV. 1 (1941), pp. 45–61.

(pl. 103*b*), near Varāmīn, repeats a motif from the hunting scenes at Ṭāq-i Bustān. Although losing the vitality of the latter through the formalized repetition imposed by the technique and its virtual subordination to the elaborate frame, the total effect is nevertheless remarkably rich and decorative.

There are a few small sculptures in semi-precious stone which, because of their size and the precious material, form a bridge between the fields of sculpture and that of glyptic art. The principal monuments in this field are two small "royal portrait busts" in lapis lazuli, one of which is illustrated on pl. 104.[1] The only other known Sasanian sculpture in this semi-precious stone is the charming little elephant recalling those in the hunting scenes at Ṭāq-i Bustān, from the Herzfeld collection, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.[2] These miniature "royal portraits" and the little elephant represent the survival – or revival – of a traditional taste for such miniature sculpture in semi-precious stone, particularly lapis lazuli which is well documented for the Achaemenian period.[3] Finally, we must note a tiny rock-crystal head, evidently broken from a more complete object, which was excavated at Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr[4] and, of the same material, a small female figurine holding a bird which was recovered from the excavations at Ctesiphon.[5]

Until recently the only significant Sasanian object in rock crystal was the medallion with an enthroned king which forms the centre of the famous "Cup of Khusrau" (pl. 107*a*) from the treasure of the abbey of St Denis, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale.[6] The crown in this instance could be that of several kings from the time of Pērōz I to Khusrau II; it has generally been thought to represent Khusrau I. Many of the elements of style, particularly the patterning of the costume and the form of the jewelry recall the art of Ṭāq-i Bustān and suggest rather an association with Khusrau II or at least an inspiration

[1] The second is in the Abegg-Stiftung, Bern. See Michael Stettler and Karel Otavsky, *Abegg-Stiftung Bern in Riggisberg, I: Kunsthandwerk-Plastik-Malerei* (Bern, 1971), pl. 7 (colour).

[2] Herzfeld, "Ein sasanidischer Elefant", and *SPA*, pl. 169b.

[3] E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis* II (Chicago, 1957), pp. 66–9 and pl. 35. Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie*, pl. 43a and c; D. Shepherd, "An Achaemenid Sculpture in Lapis Lazuli", *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* XLVIII (February, 1961), pp. 18–25; and Ghirshman, *Persia*, Frontispiece and figs. 294–5.

[4] Hauser and Upton, "The Persian Expedition, 1933–34", fig. 37, and Frye, *Sasanian Remains*, fig. 14.

[5] Frye, *Sasanian Remains*, p. 17.

[6] E. Babelon, *Catalogue des Camées antiques de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1897), No. 379, pl. XLV; *SPA*, pl. 203; Ghirshman, *Iran*, pl. 244 (colour).

from the art of that period. The recent finds attributed to the Dailamān region have included several oval bowls in rock crystal, the subjects of which, as here, are those already familiar on Sasanian silver to which they are closely related in style and offer the same problems with respect to precise dating.[1] The design of each is carved in intaglio on the under side of the vessel. To this group and in the same technique can be added the two cupels of rock crystal and jadeite found at Susa and now in the Louvre.[2]

Finally, forming a link between these carved stone vessels and the art of the seal cutter, there is a large rock-crystal seal-stone with a superbly carved miniature hunting scene (pl. 106*g*). It is of particular interest because in style it corresponds closely to the Cleveland alabaster plaque (pl. 101*a*) and the Tehran plate (pl. 101*b*).[3] Like the latter, the horseman is shown turning backwards in the saddle and shooting at the pursuing lion; his sword is in the same position under his leg, as discussed and explained by Ghirshman,[4] in connection with the royal hunter on the silver plate.

4. MINOR ARTS

(*a*) *Glyptic*

Sasanian glyptic art is known via two principal sources: the seals themselves which have been preserved in great numbers – literally thousands – and the impressions of seals on clay *bullae*.[5] The latter were lumps of soft clay, pressed over cords, sealing documents or merchandise in transit, into which the seals of officials or other concerned parties were pressed. Several hoards of such bullae have been found, of which the largest and most important are those from Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr[6] and Takht-i Sulaimān.[7] Because of the nature of the material and the resulting impressions it is generally difficult to judge the aesthetic qualities of the seals from which they were made. Fortunately this aspect is well documented by the many surviving seals.[8]

[1] The subjects on the others, none of which appear to have been published, include a mounted and a standing royal figure pursuing, or in combat with lions and there is one with a great senmurv like those at Ṭāq-i Bustān.

[2] Amiet, *Revue du Louvre* XVII (1967), figs. 10–11, and Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 264.

[3] See n. 1, p. 1096.

[4] *Iran*, p. 209.

[5] See also Ch. 32(*a*) on the subject.

[6] Frye, *Sasanian Remains*.

[7] Naumann, *AA* LXXX (1965), cols. 643–5, figs. 10–21, and *Illustrated London News* (January 16, 1963), p. 7, figs. 3–5.

[8] See under "Glyptic Art" in the Bibliography to this chapter for the most recent important works on this subject; a more comprehensive bibliography, including the older works, will be found in Bivar, *Catalogue of . . . British Museum*.

The Sasanian seal was a stamp seal, the most usual forms being a small hemisphere or a three quarter sphere, giving a round impression, or these forms were slightly flattened on the sides to give an oval impression. They were normally unmounted and were pierced, like a bead, so that they could be threaded onto a string, a wire or metal ring. More rare are flattened forms which were set in finger rings. The material was almost universally semi-precious stone of which a great variety was used;[1] carnelian, sard, chalcedony and agate were apparently the most favoured. As evidence that precious stones were also used for this purpose, we have, for example, the description by the Muslim historian, Masʿūdī,[2] of a seal with a portrait of Khusrau II carved in ruby and set in diamonds. One of the most beautiful of those which have come down to us is the amethyst seal of Queen Dēnak in the Hermitage.[3] Although more difficult to date and arrange chronologically than the coins, there are nevertheless a sufficient number with inscriptions which can be dated paleographically or, more rarely, by the incised name of an identifiable personage, to make it possible to establish a reasonably reliable chronological sequence, by means of which the stylistic and technical development of this art can be followed throughout the Sasanian period.[4]

The subjects represented on the seals run the full gamut of Sasanian iconography as known in other media and include many which are exclusive to this medium. They show a wide variety in style and technical competence which corresponds not only to chronological considerations but undoubtedly also reflects the status and means of the individual for whom they were made. By all counts, from the standpoint of aesthetics and art history, the most important and almost universally the finest are those with royal or official portraits (pl. 105*b*). These are normally in the form of busts such as we have seen in bronze, silver and lapis lazuli and, like them, are often represented rising from a leafy calyx. This symbolism, which goes back to Roman and Hellenistic art, has there been interpreted as having an eschatological significance,[5] a meaning which, judging from the iconography of the Sasanian seals as a whole, may very well have been understood and perpetuated by the

[1] See Lukonin, *Persia II*, figs. 55–6 and 102–3 for excellent colour reproductions illustrating the mounting and giving an impression of the quality and colour of some of these gemstones.

[2] C. A. C. Barbier de Meynard, *Maçoudi, les Prairies d'or* (Paris, 1861–77) II, p. 228; cited in P. Ackerman, "Sasanian Seals", *SPA*, p. 785.

[3] Lukonin, *op. cit.*, fig. 59.

[4] The best recent résumés are Lukonin, *op. cit.*, pp. 92–107, and see Frye and Bivar under "Glyptic" in the Bibliography.

[5] H. Juker, *Das Bildnis im Blätterkelch* (Lausanne, 1961).

Sasanian artists. Although it has only rarely been possible to identify royal portraits,[1] there are many with the names and titles of important officials and particularly numerous are those of the Zoroastrian priesthood.[2] Full figures, groups of figures or "scenes" are relatively rare. With few exceptions, such as the standing figure of Bahrām IV in the British Museum (pl. 106*a*), most of the full figures can be interpreted as deities or symbolic or allegorical figures. The most usual are figures of the goddess Anāhitā, shown "vestida" (pl. 106*b*) or "desnuda" (pl. 106*c*), as on the silver vessels, and a variety of versions of Eros with a diadem[3] obviously related to the one on the relief of Shāpūr at Bishāpūr. In one instance, Anāhitā reclines on a typically Sasanian *kline* throne and holds the child Eros in her lap; he stretches forth his hand holding a beribboned diadem studded with three large flowers.[4] Anāhitā occurs on a few rare seals with scenes related to the iconography of investiture or royal apotheosis (pl. 106*d*)[5]; in some cases it would seem they are more logically to be interpreted as representing scenes of heroization.[6] The sun god, Mithra, is represented by a bust in flaming aureole carried aloft in his chariot drawn by *pegasi* (pl. 106*e*). In addition to the unique mounted horseman in the Bibliothèque Nationale (pl. 106*f*), there are a few male figures; in rare examples they are shown in combat with a lion but most are represented as worshippers before a fire altar.[7] By far the greatest number of subjects on the seals are animals, particularly mythological "species" which in virtually every case can be interpreted as having some religious, astrological or apotropaic significance. Unfortunately, it is impossible even to begin to discuss these many fascinating motifs and their possible meanings within the limitations of space permitted here.[8]

Another type of miniature stone sculpture is represented by the famous sardonyx cameo in the Bibliothèque Nationale depicting

[1] *SPA*, pl. 255c, inscribed, according to Herzfeld (*Paikuli*, p. 78) with the name of Bahrām IV. This inscription is quoted by Ackerman, *loc. cit.*

[2] Bivar, *Catalogue*, p. 24, and Frye, *Sasanian Remains*, pp. 47 and 50.

[3] For the ubiquity of the Anāhitā types, see especially Bivar, *Catalogue*, nos. CA-1 to CE-2, pls. 7–8. For the Eros type, see Bivar, nos. BK-1 to 5, pl. 6.

[4] Bivar, *Catalogue*, pl. 8 (CD-1); Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 296.

[5] Bivar, *Catalogue*, BL-1, CF-1.

[6] *Ibid.*, CF-1, 2. For this interpretation of the iconography, see Shepherd, "Iconography of Anahita", pp. 3636–45, esp. p. 3642.

[7] See e.g., Bivar, *op. cit.*, nos. BD-1 to 5, pl. 5, and CG-1, 2, pl. 8.

[8] See the illustrations in Bivar, *op. cit.*, pls. 9–24, and particularly the descriptions by Harper in Frye, *Sasanian Remains*, pp. 72ff. Ackerman ("Sasanian Seals") is the only one who has attempted to interpret their iconography, audaciously at times, but with some validity.

Shāpūr's capture of Valerian. Although the identification of the subjects has been questioned because of the discrepancy of the crown with that of Shāpūr on the reliefs and coins,[1] the consistency of the iconography with that on the rock reliefs leaves no reasonable doubt that the protagonists in this case are *meant* to be Shāpūr and Valerian. It is extremely doubtful, however, that this object was executed by an Iranian artist. The unusual figure style, particularly in the bold treatment of the Sasanian King's apparently bare muscular figure, is entirely out of keeping with what we know of Sasanian art and has no counterpart in any example of glyptic art. It is most probable that this cameo was the work of a western artist who did not fully understand his Sasanian model. The same is probably true of the second, but fragmentary, sardonyx cameo in the Bibliothèque Nationale with a "Sasanian" king killing (?) a bull.[2] Three more small cameos, in the same collection,[3] representing animal combat scenes rather ineptly executed and summary in treatment, recall somewhat the alabaster plaque from Ctesiphon mentioned above. They are, perhaps, to be regarded as an attempt by Sasanian artists to carve cameos after the Western fashion; this otherwise seems not to have been a Sasanian technique. The only other Sasanian gem carved in relief seems to be the carnelian with a bust, generally accepted as representing Kavād I, which is also in the Bibliothèque Nationale.[4]

That ivory had always been one of the precious materials favoured by the craftsmen of Iran is attested by numerous objects dating back to at least the beginning of the second millennium.[5] We know from Tha'ālibī's description of the *takht-i ṭāqdīs*[6] that this must have continued to be true in the Sasanian period; surviving documents,

[1] Herzfeld, "Khusrau Parvēz und der Ṭāq-i Vastan", pp. 137–8; see Babelon, *op. cit.*, no. 360, pl. XLII; Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 195.

[2] Babelon, *op. cit.*, no. 359, pl. XLII.

[3] *Ibid.*, nos. 364, 365 and 365*bis*, pl. XLII.

[4] *Ibid.*, no. 361, pl. XLII; Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 293; *SPA*, pl. 255b.

[5] For the Elamite examples, see P. Amiet, *Elam* (Paris, 1966), pls. 217, 271, 325, 327. In N.W. Iran, ivory is documented at the end of 1st millennium B.C. at Hasanlu (cf. R. Dyson, "Ninth Century Man in Western Iran", *Archaeology* XVII, 1 (Spring 1964), figs. 1–2) and from the Median period in the treasury of Ziwiye (Ghirshman, *Persia*, fig. 135). For the Achaemenian period, we have Darius' foundation inscriptions from Susa which record the use of ivory (A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1959), p. 168) and Achaemenian ivories have been found at Susa; cf. P. Amiet, "Les ivoires Achéménides de Suse", *Syria* L (1973), pp. 167–91, 319–37. For the Parthian period, there is the hoard of ivories recovered at Nisā (M. E. Masson and G. A. Pugachenkova, *Parfianskiye Ritoni Nisy* (Moscow, 1956), and G. Frumkin, *Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia* (Leiden/Köln, 1970), pls. LXI-LXVII).

[6] Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 466.

however, are among the most rare. The only documented example is the tiny figurine of a warrior that was found in the ruins of Ctesiphon.[1] Aside from this figurine, the only ivories which can be brought to bear in this context are two small caskets which have appeared on the market, one before 1930, now in the Stoclet collection,[2] and the other only recently, without the benefit of any clues as to their provenance. The first, though clearly of Sasanian inspiration and iconography, must, however, on stylistic grounds be assigned to the early Islamic period. The amusing rabbit with its inordinately large ears, the camel, and even Bahrām Gūr would seem to be more at home in Fāṭimid Egypt than in Sasanian Iran. In style, the decoration of the second casket which consists of a king hunting boars on one long side and senmurvs on the two short ends, is closely related to that of the late Sasanian or early post-Sasanian silver plates. Together these two objects offer evidence of the unbroken continuation of this ancient Iranian art through the Sasanian period and into early Islamic times.

(*b*) *Jewelry*

Our knowledge of Sasanian jewelry is largely confined to historical sources[3] and to its representation in other media, particularly the reliefs at Ṭāq-i Bustān (pl. 95). Unfortunately, for the most part, these representations follow rather stereotyped formulae which surely do not reflect the actual opulence and variety which must have existed. Only extremely rare examples have come down to us and of these only very few are documented. The most famous and oft reproduced is the hyacinth-encrusted gold buckle (pl. 107*b*) inscribed in Pahlavī with the name "Ardashīr", which was found in Germany together with a Roman coin of the 4th century.[4] The two cupels from Susa, mentioned above, may well have served as jewelry; at any rate they give us one more precious clue to the Sasanian goldsmith's art. This is equally true of the celebrated "Cup of Khusrau"; here the body of the vessel is formed by an elaborate reticulated gold framework filled with inlays of coloured glass and bordered with narrow bands set with coloured

[1] Upton, "The Expedition to Ctesiphon", p. 196.

[2] Otto von Falke, "Ein Sassanidischer Elfenbeinkasten", *Pantheon* I (March, 1928), pp. 144–6; Brussels – Adolphe Stoclet Collection, *Adolphe Stoclet Collection, Part I: Selection of the Works belonging to Madame Feron-Stoclet* (Brussels, 1956), pl. 281. It was shown in the London Exhibition of 1931 as no. 91B and in Paris, *Sept mille ans*, etc., as no. 778.

[3] Summarized by Ackerman, "Sāsānian Jewelry", *SPA*, pp. 774–6; and see Christensen, *op. cit.*, pp. 397–8 and 466–7.

[4] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 265; *SPA*, pl. 249.

cloisons (pl. 107*a*). Several objects from the Petrossa treasure, though obviously related in technique to the "Cup of Khusrau", have also been claimed for Iran;[1] however, this attribution cannot be accepted with full confidence. The only other documented Sasanian jewelry consists of a small number of inconsequential items recovered from various excavations.[2]

Our principal source regarding Sasanian jewelry is provided by the objects (unfortunately undocumented) which have appeared on the market in recent years, along with many other classes of objects, reportedly from commercial excavations of graves in the Dailamān region. For the most part the jewelry from these finds is only represented by now dissociated beads of gold, semi-precious stone, glass and glass paste. However, there have also appeared a number of intact gold necklaces, often of surprisingly imaginative design and extremely intricate workmanship. The gold work which may be cast or repoussé is often further embellished with filigree and granulation; there are even examples of tiny sculpture in the round such as we know in early Greek and Hellenistic jewelry.[3] Semi-precious stones, of which lapis lazuli and garnet seem to have been most favoured, are often incorporated in the designs. Unfortunately, the majority have remained unrecorded and have passed into private hands or have disappeared into the limbo of the art market. Only a few have been published[4] or have found sanctuary in important museum collections and are destined to find their place in the slowly expanding corpus of Sasanian jewelry and goldsmiths' work. One of the most important to have entered a museum collection is a superb *collier* acquired by the Louvre (pl. 107*c*).[5] It consists of a series of gold plaques inlaid with garnets and, in the centre, a gold medallion with a "royal" bust in repoussé.

Technically related to the latter is the decoration on a number of swords said to be from the same grave-finds.[6] The hilts and scabbards of the swords are covered with thin sheets of gold, or more rarely

[1] Ackerman, *op. cit.*, pp. 771–3, pls. 249, B–D and 250, A–B.

[2] For example, Qasr-i Abū Naṣr (Hauser and Upton, "The Persian Expedition, 1933–34", fig. 28) and M. Negro Ponzi, "Jewelry and Small Objects from Tell Mahuz", *Mesopotamia* v–vi (1970–1), pp. 391–425, figs. 85–6.

[3] See e.g., the many examples illustrated in H. Hoffmann and P. F. Davidson, *Greek Gold: Jewelry from the Age of Alexander*: Exhibition, Boston, Brooklyn and Richmond, November 22 1965–May 1 1966 (Boston, 1965).

[4] Ann Arbor, *Sasanian Silver*, nos. 59–62.

[5] *Revue du Louvre* xvii (1967), p. 278, fig. 12.

[6] One is in the Louvre (*ibid.*, fig. 15); another is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (*Guide to the Collections*, *Ancient Near Eastern Art* (New York, 1966), no. 60); a third is in the Tenri Sankōkan Museum, Tokyo (*Handbook*, no. 1).

silver, fashioned in repoussé and often further embellished with filigree and granulation and, in some cases, inset with semi-precious stones (pl. 107*d*). The Louvre has also acquired the elements of a gold belt, evidently a sword-belt, which is decorated in the same fashion.[1] In this connection it is interesting to compare an Albanian account regarding a local prince, J̌uanšēr, who fought with the Persians against the Arabs under Yazdgard III. Yazdgard rewarded him for his valorous exploits with many rich gifts and he "invested" him with a gold belt studded with pearls and a gold sword.[2] The swords and the belt which have come down to us are of a particular type, seemingly the invention of the Avars, which is first documented as having been adopted by the Sasanians in the reliefs of Ṭāq-i Bustān.[3] This fact establishes a date at the very end of the period for the sword and seems to confirm a similar date for many of the other objects for which this provenance is claimed.

(*c*) *Glassware*

Glassware perhaps constitutes the most numerous class of objects from these commercial finds. Fortunately, in this case the provenance is corroborated, in part at least, by excavations by Tokyo University.[4] Previously this Sasanian craft had only been imperfectly documented by a few excavated examples from Kish,[5] Ctesiphon,[6] and Susa,[7] and through a number of widely dispersed examples which had found their way to Scandinavia and other European sites,[8] and finally through the few pieces in the ancient Japanese imperial treasure in the Shōsō-in,[9] as well as a small number of other pieces of Far-Eastern pro-

[1] *Revue du Louvre*, *op. cit.*, pp. 275–6, fig. 5.

[2] Mousēs Dasxuranci, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, tr. C. J. F. Dowsett (London, 1961), pp. 109–13.

[3] Ghirshman, "Notes iraniennes XIII".

[4] The first published examples from the commercial finds seem to have been those in the Foroughi collection which were shown in the Paris exhibition, *Sept mille ans, etc.*, nos. 837–50. See von Saldern, "Achaemenid and Sasanian Cut Glass", for discussion of several vessels of this provenance now in the Corning Museum of Glass, Corning Glass Center, N.Y. The majority seem to have gone into Japanese collections; see under Fukai, Masuda and the *Handbook* of the Tenri Sankōkan Museum in the Bibliography. Fukai, *Study*, discusses (pp. 14–18, pls. 29–31) the glass from Tomb 7 excavated by Tokyo University at Hassani Mahale; on this see also Tokyo University, *Dailaman* III, pp. 32–3, 61–4, and pls. I, XVII, XLI, 1a and b.

[5] Harden, "Glass from Kish".

[6] Puttrich-Reignard, *Die Glasfund von Ktesiphon.*

[7] Ghirshman, *Iran*, p. 238, fig. 291; *idem*, *Mémoires de la Mission*, p. 9.

[8] See the principal bibliography in von Saldern, *op. cit.*, notes 14–18.

[9] [Oshima, Y.] *Shosoin gomotsu zuroku: Catalogue of the Imperial Treasures in the Shosoin* (Tokyo, 1934), pls. I-III, V: Shinji Fukai, "A Persian Treasure"; Ghirshman, *Iran*, pl. 443, C-D.

venance which for the most part have only recently become known.[1] The belated publication of the glasses from the 1936–7 excavations of early Sasanian graves at Tell Mahuz in northern Mesopotamia has shed further important light on the history of this craft.[2]

From the evidence now at hand, it appears that the principal Sasanian centres of glass production were in northern Mesopotamia and northwest Iran.[3] It is possible that this industry may have descended from that which evidently existed in this region from at least the end of the second millennium B.C.[4] Archaeological evidence indicates that Susa, too, may have had an important glass industry,[5] perhaps the successor of that which is attested to there in the Middle Elamite period.[6] While the prevailing technique, glassblowing, is undoubtedly to be traced to East Roman influence, the Sasanian production seems to have developed independently while paralleling that of the rest of the contemporary ancient world.

Among the early wares from Tell Mahuz, the principal types are a comparatively thin, free-blown fabric with tooled and, more rarely, trailed thread decoration (pl. 108*b*); the basic form was often modified by twisting the whole fabric.[7] This technique is represented in its simplest and most beautiful form in the well known ewer in the Shōsō-in and, again, by an almost identical one from Susa;[8] many more elaborate versions are among those from the recent Dailamān finds (pl. 108*a*, *b*).[9] Mould-blown wares are represented by a bowl in Berlin (pl. 108*c*) ornamented with winged horses in medallions which stand out in high relief. There are several examples of gilding in which the designs, cut out in gold leaf, are sealed between two layers of glass (pl. 108*d*).[10]

The most numerous and seemingly most typical Sasanian glass type is that of a very thick blown fabric with cut decoration (pl. 108*e*, *f*). The cutting may be in a variety of simple geometric forms or, more

[1] On the other Sasanian glasses found in Japan, see Fukai, *Study*, pp. 6–7; *idem*, "A Fragment of Sasanian cut glass"; Sōma-Takashi, "*Yakō-hai*".

[2] See two articles by Negro Ponzi in the Bibliography.

[3] See Negro Ponzi and von Saldern in the Bibliography.

[4] Axel von Saldern, "Mosaic Glass from Hasanlu, Marlik and Tell al-Rimah", *Journal of Glass Studies* VIII (1966), pp. 9–25.

[5] See p. 1104, n. 7 above.

[6] Amiet, *op. cit.*, fig. 262.

[7] See Negro Ponzi in the Bibliography.

[8] Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 291; the Shōsō-in ewer is illustrated in fig. 443D and [Oshima, Y.], *op. cit.*, pl. II.

[9] See Fukai, *Study*, figs. 30–40; Ghirshman, *Iran*, figs. 292A, C.

[10] Another fragment, also in the Corning Museum, is illustrated in The Corning Museum of Glass, *A Tribute to Persia* (Exhibition catalogue), no. 7; both objects are illustrated in Ann Arbor, *op. cit.*, nos. 75–6.

commonly, various forms of faceting.[1] By far the most common type of faceted decoration consists of an all over pattern of small contiguous or sometimes overlapping, slightly concave discs. This type is ubiquitous among the excavated material but the most famous example is the bowl in the Shōsō-in (pl. 108*e*). The hemispherical form of this bowl is characteristic of the majority of the glasses in this technique.[2] Among the more recent finds, however, a number of other shapes have appeared; they include several rhyta in the shape of vases[3] and at least one pair of amphora-rhyta (pl. 108*f*).[4] The vases exactly parallel known shapes in Sasanian silver and gold vessels and it is significant that many silver vessels in these shapes are also attributed to the same finds.[5] The actual finding of Sasanian glass in Dailamān tombs by the Tokyo University expedition (pl. 108*a*) provides strong evidence that all of these glass vessels, like those from Tell Mahuz, have come from Sasanian graves. The identity of shapes suggests that these vessels, whether glass or silver, served the same mortuary and perhaps ritual purposes.[6] It would seem, therefore, that the art of the Sasanian glassmaker must have held a position of pre-eminence perhaps not inferior to that of the silver- or goldsmith. Although this cut and faceted type of glass seems to be attested for the whole Sasanian period, only one such example was found among the early glasses at Tell Mahuz as against its relative frequency among the later finds at Kish and Ctesiphon and its great predominance among the glasses from the finds in north-western Iran. The fact suggests an increased popularity of this technique in the later Sasanian period and it was undoubtedly these wares which, as Axel von Saldern has suggested,[7] "sparked off" the further development of the cut glasses of the Islamic period.

[1] For a résumé and illustrations of these techniques, see von Saldern, "Achaemenid and Sasanian Cut Glass".

[2] Of Sasanian inspiration, if not origin, is a carved eight-lobed glass bowl also in the Shōsō-in ([Oshima. Y.], *op. cit.*, Plate 5).

[3] See Corning Museum, *op. cit.*, no. 11; Fukai, *Study*, pls. 25, 27.

[4] The second one is in the Norbert Schimmel collection (The Fogg Museum of Harvard University, *The Beauty of Ancient Art* [Exhibition of the Norbert Schimmel Collection, November 15 1964–February 14 1965], Mainz [1964], no. 82).

[5] For these shapes in silver from the recent Dailamān finds, see e.g., Shepherd, "Sasanian Art in Cleveland", figs. 20–1, 25, and Fukai, *Study*, pls. 43–56. A similar vase-rhyton in silver is in the Īrān-i Bastān Museum, Tehran (cf. Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 256). Fluted silver bowls have long been known from Russian and Polish finds (see I. I. Smirnov, *Vostochnoe Serebro* [Argenterie Orientale] (St. Petersburg, 1909), nos. 75–78).

[6] On the probable ritual purpose of these vessels, see Shepherd, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–8; *idem*, "Two silver rhyta", pp. 301–4; *idem*, "Iconography of Anahita", esp. p. 3650.

[7] "Achaemenid and Sasanian Cut Glass", p. 16.

(*d*) *Ceramics*

The field of ceramics is the only one of the decorative arts in which the Sasanian craftsmen produced nothing of distinction. By contrast with the surviving quantities of luxury vessels in silver and glass, one gains the impression of a society so opulent that clay vessels were relegated to the most humble purposes of cooking and storage. The great majority of vessels are extremely simple, undecorated wares of traditional utilitarian forms.[1] Such decoration as exists is largely limited to the most rudimentary of the craftsman's techniques: incising, chipping, stamping and moulding, and sometimes the application of barbotine ornament.[2] Glazed wares are rare and seem to be limited to those from Mesopotamian sites and from Susa (pl. 109*a*). They still employ the uninspiring gamut of greenish lead glazes that already characterized the Mesopotamian ceramics in the Parthian period.[3] The highest development of the craft seems to be represented by a few more elaborate vessels obviously imitating others in metal, very probably silver, as can now be demonstrated in the case of the famous rhyton in the British Museum (pl. 109*b*).[4] The bottle in the Foroughi collection (pl. 109*c*) is an obvious imitation of another well-known silver shape. A number of more elaborately decorated vessels[5] which appear to be Sasanian have come from commercial excavations, a fact which complicates the task of establishing their place in the chronological sequence.

(*e*) *Textiles*

The study of Sasanian textiles, which is the last of the decorative arts to be discussed here, is hampered by an almost total lack of factual information. The meagreness of the historical sources is matched by the paucity of textile documents. For the most part, moreover, such evidence as we do have, pertains to the very end of the period. We are left with only one clue to the earlier history of this industry in Sasanian Iran. Mas'ūdī[6] records that Shāpūr II settled weavers from the north Mesopotamian city of Amida, in Susa and other cities in Khūzistān and

[1] New discoveries have not added appreciably to our knowledge in this field; still the best and virtually the only general treatment of this subject is that of R. Ettinghausen, in *SPA*, pp. 646–80.

[2] For illustrations of the types discussed here, see *SPA*, pls. 185–90.

[3] *SPA*, pls. 187–92.

[4] Shepherd, "Two Silver Rhyta", pp. 294–5; the B. M. rhyton is illustrated in *SPA*, pl. 185A; there are two related types, pls. 185B, C.

[5] *SPA*, pls. 192, 195.

[6] *Les Prairies d'or* II, p. 186, quoted by Christensen, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

that they introduced new types of silks and brocades. This story is seemingly corroborated by an account in the "Acts of the Martyrs" regarding a certain Possy, who is said to have been the head of a workshop attached to Shāpūr's palace in Susa and later at Karkhā də Lēdān.[1] Possy's specialty was weaving brocades of silk and gold. The importance of the story of the Amida weavers and the account of Possy lies in the fact that they tend to prove that silk-weaving, including brocading in gold, was already being practised in Iran in the 4th century.[2] Unfortunately, textile patterns are not represented in any of the early reliefs and we have no other sources which provide clues to the nature of the designs that may then have been in use during the early Sasanian period.

The historical sources leave no doubt about the great quantities of rich textiles which were in use at the Sasanian court under the later kings, especially Khusrau I and II. We have, for example, the description of the great carpet, called the "Springtime of Khusrau", which hung in the reception hall at Ctesiphon. It represented a garden with watercourses bordered by fields of grain and orchards. The branches and flowers of the plants and trees were made of gold and silver and precious stones of many colours.[3] Other sources describe the great "four seasons" carpets, brocaded in gold and ornamented with pearls and rubies, which covered the *takht-i ṭāqdīs*, the famous throne of Khusrau II.[4] When Khusrau's army was defeated by Heraclius in 628, the booty taken from his palace in the sack of Dastgard is recorded as having included "embroidered carpets, silk stuff and silken garments without number".[5] That this did not deplete the royal stores is indicated by the story of J̌uanšēr, mentioned above; among the royal gifts which he received were included "leggings sewn with pearls and Persian coats of taffeta and silk with fringes of spun gold".[6]

For obvious reasons, rich textiles of the sort described by the historians have not survived. Indeed, not one textile that can be attributed to the Sasanian period has yet been found in Persia. Our knowledge of Sasanian textiles is limited to the representations in the reliefs at Ṭāq-i Bustān (pl. 111*c*) and in frescoes at many sites in Central

[1] Ghirshman, *Bishāpour I*, p. 13, after Pigulevskaya.

[2] Herzfeld, *Die Malereien*, p. 69, suggests that this reference may be to weavers from Antioch taken by Shāpūr I; Possy's story seems to confirm Mas'ūdī's account.

[3] Ṭabarī, *Annales* I, p. 2452.

[4] Th'ālibī, *Histoire des rois des Perses*, ed. and trans. H. Zotenberg (Paris, 1900), pp. 698–9.

[5] Sarre-Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise* II, p. 89, after Theophanes.

[6] See p. 1104, n. 2.

Asia (pl. 110*a*)[1] and, from among the many textiles which have at one time or another been claimed as Sasanian, to a small, hard core, with truly Sasanian motifs in pure Sasanian style that can reasonably be accepted as authentic; they are represented here in plates 110–11. The identification of Sasanian textiles has been complicated by their obvious popularity and the profusion with which they were copied, not only by contemporary weavers – both East and West – but also for many centuries to follow. The problem has been that of distinguishing between textiles with Sasanian motifs – and often presumed Sasanian motifs – and actual Sasanian textiles. It is on this point that much of the textile literature of the past has foundered.

The small corpus of textiles which it has been possible to identify as Sasanian has been preserved in graves in Central Asia and Egypt and in church treasuries in Europe. The majority are silk and are woven in the compound-twill technique;[2] there are also a few fragments of woollen tapestry which perhaps can also be attributed to Sasanian Iran because of the purity of their style.

The silks can be subdivided on technical grounds into two principal groups. The first forms a very closely-knit stylistic group which is further defined by two very precise technical features: the exclusive use of triple bright-red main warps and the technique of shading small areas by alternate passages of a dark and a light weft. The most famous textiles of this group are the ram and Pegasus silks from Antinoë (pl. 110*c*),[3] the boar's-head silk from Astāna (pl. 110*b*),[4] another Pegasus silk from Turfān[5] and the Vatican "goose".[6] The unity of style and technique suggests that all are products of a single weaving centre and were woven within a relatively limited period. It is impossible even to hypothesize the precise locale of the school but there is much stylistic and archaeological evidence pointing to a late Sasanian date for the period of its activity. Iconographically the patterns in this group comprise a very limited repertory of "classic" Sasanian motifs which seem to have been chosen for their special significance.[7] Stylistically

[1] Bāmiyān, Afrāsiyāb, Varaksha, Balalyk Tepe and Panjikent (see p. 1089, n. 2).

[2] For definitions of the technical terms see C.I.E.T.A. (Centre International d'Étude des Textiles Anciens), Vocabulary of Technical Terms (English edition), Lyon, October, 1964. There are also editions in other languages.

[3] A. Gayet, "L'Exploration des ruines d'Antinoë et la découverte d'un temple de Ramsès II", *Annales du Musée Guimet* XXVI. 3 (1897), pp. 61–2.

[4] M. A. Stein, *Innermost Asia* II (Oxford, 1928), pp. 682–3; III, pl. LXXVI.

[5] Von Falke, *Kunstgeschichte*, fig. 48.

[6] W. F. Volbach, *I Tessuti del Museo Sacro Vaticano* (Città del Vaticano, 1942), pls. XXVI, XXXII.

[7] N. A. Toll, "Notes sur l'iconographie".

they can be compared with the textile patterns represented on the reliefs at Ṭāq-i Bustān and in the paintings of Central Asia[1] – all of which fall within the late 6th to early 8th century. The same motifs occur on many silver vessels and particularly on the late stuccos from Dāmghān and Chāl Ṭarkhān, discussed above. The archaeological evidence is provided by the dating indicated for the two examples from Astāna tombs which Stein[2] dated to the early 7th century. This dating is confirmed by further, recent finds at Astāna of a number of obviously Central Asian and Chinese copies of these very silks. The caves in which these copies were found are dated by the excavators to between 653 and 665;[3] these dates would seem to confirm the Sasanian date for the Persian prototypes.

The second group, of which the majority comes from European church treasures[4] and some few from Egyptian graves,[5] represents a miscellany of motifs and variations in the number and colour of the main warps; the shading technique of the first group is not present. It is only possible here to mention briefly a very few of this more numerous group.[6] We may compare, for example, a fragment in the treasury of the cathedral of Aachen (pl. 111*a*) with the design on a costume represented in one of the paintings of the 7th century at Afrāsiyāb (pl. 110*a*, centre figure). The little triadic mountain which the painter has faithfully reproduced is a typical motif on Sasanian silver and it is this same motif which gives the clue to the provenance of another small fragment in the cathedral treasure at Sens.[7] Another silk in Aachen[8] and the small fragment in Cleveland (pl. 111*b*),[9] which came from the Cairo market, follow so closely the textile patterns at Ṭāq-i Bustān (e.g. pl. 111*c*) that a Sasanian attribution seems beyond question.

[1] See n. 208.

[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 648–9.

[3] These finds have been made by Chinese and Japanese expeditions; the material is discussed and the bibliography given in M. W. Meister, "The Pearl Roundel in Chinese Textile Design", *Ars Orientalis* VIII (1970), pp. 255–67.

[4] The writer has catalogued some sixteen examples, all of which are in the following collections: Museo Sacro, Vatican; Cathedral Treasures, Sens and Aachen; Musée Diocésain, Liège. The majority are unpublished; for the published examples see: Volbach, *op. cit.*, pl. 36; Lessing, *Die Gewebe-Sammlung des königlichen Kunstgewerbe-museums* (Berlin, 1913), pls. 23a, 24a, c; E. Chartraire, "Les Tissues anciens du Trésor de la Cathédrale de Sens", *Revue de l'Art chrétien* LXI (1911), nos. 13 and 26.

[5] See p. 1111, n. 3; as well as the Cleveland fragment discussed below there are two others: one is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (A. C. Weibel, *Two Thousand Years of Textiles* (New York, 1952), no. 58), the other in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (unpublished).

[6] See *SPA*, esp. pl. 207; others are in pls. 204–5 and 216.

[7] Chartraire, *op. cit.*, no. 13, fig. p. 278.

[8] Lessing, *op. cit.*, pl. 23a.

[9] Shepherd, "A Persian Textile".

As for the woollen textiles, the most likely candidates for Sasanian attribution are two woollen tapestry fragments, both of Egyptian provenance. One is the fragmentary reclining ibex in Yale (pl. 112*b*);[1] the other (pl. 112*a*)[2] combines two motifs from the "triple red warp" silks – the ubiquitous boar's head in a pearled roundel (cf. pl. 110*b*) and, above, a row of pearls and the beribboned hocks of a horse (cf. pl. 110*c*) bespeak a motif that must have been similar to the Pegasus silk from Turfān. It is impossible within the limits imposed here to discuss the pros and cons of the many other fragments of woollen tapestries and compound weaves which have been claimed for Sasanian Iran largely on the basis of Sasanian style motifs and the presence of cotton in some of them.[3]

Because of the great confusion in the literature on the subject, it is necessary to mention briefly here those textiles which have been most frequently claimed as Sasanian but which cannot be substantiated as such. The cock silk in the Vatican,[4] although obviously closely following a Sasanian design, has certain technical and stylistic features which strongly suggest, however, that it was made outside Iran. The most complex problem is presented by a series of silks with a pattern of senmurvs[5] clearly derived from textiles such as those pictured in the reliefs at Ṭāq-i Bustān and in many other media of Sasanian art. With the exception of one, of the late 'Abbasid or early Buyid period from the Necropolis at Rayy,[6] none can be claimed for Iran and there is much evidence against a Sasanian date for all of the others.[7] At Antinoë, along with the ram and the Pegasus silks, was found another group of silks – the so-called Antinoë silks – which have long been a subject of controversy. Von Falke[8] attributed them to workshops in

[1] Ackerman, "A Sasanian Tapestry"; *idem*, *SPA*, p. 708, fig. 249; Weibel, *op. cit.*, no. 30.

[2] Paris, *Sept mille ans, etc.*, no. 857, pl. XCVI.

[3] On these, see Pfister, "Coqs sassanides" and Lamb, *Cotton in Medieval Textiles of the Near East*, pp. 10–93.

[4] Von Falke, fig. 98; *SPA*, pl. 201C; Ghirshman, *Iran*, fig. 280.

[5] Ghirshman, *Iran*, figs. 271–6; *SPA*, pls. 199B, 200.

[6] Cleveland 72.22 (unpublished).

[7] For evidence of the 9th-century date for two examples in France, see: J. Dupont *et al.* "Le Linceul de Saint Rémi", *Bulletin de liaison du C.I.E.T.A.* xv (January 1962), p. 38 and J. Feray, "Le Tombeau de saint Rémi et ses problèmes", *Les Monuments historiques de la France*, N.S. v, no. 1 (1959), pp. 9–13. A silk kaftan with senmurvs was recently excavated in Russia from a 9th-century tomb; see: A. Ierusalimskaya, "Novaia nakhodka tak nazyivaemogo Sasanidskogo selka s senmurvami", (A Newly Discovered so-called Sasanian Silk with the Senmurv Pattern) *Soobshcheniya Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha* xxxiv (1972), pp. 11–15, 79.

[8] Von Falke, pp. 31–41, figs. 37–45.

Antinoë itself; later Herzfeld[1] and Pfister,[2] and others after them, have claimed them as Sasanian. Although von Falke's attribution to Antinoë cannot be sustained, there can be no question that these silks are the products of a Mediterranean workshop and that the Sasanian elements, so far as they do exist, can be seen as nothing more than "persaneries" which played a minor rôle in these highly imaginative designs. These various non-Persian textiles, however, provide important evidence of now-lost Sasanian prototypes and they offer striking testimony of the force and breadth of the influence of Sasanian textile art.

[1] Herzfeld, *Malereien*, particularly p. 67.

[2] R. Pfister, "Les premiers soies sassanides", *Études d'Orientalisme publiées par le Musée Guimet à la mémoire de* R. *Linossier* (Paris, 1932), pp. 461–79. Pfister reviews the various publications on the subject by previous writers and gives his own arguments based on a curious sequence of misunderstandings re history, style, and technique. His work has received wide acceptance and has recently been confirmed (cf. Agnès Geijer, "A Silk from Antinoë and the Sasanian Textile Art", *Orientalia Suecana* XII (1963), pp. 3–36).

CHAPTER 29 (*b*)

SASANIAN SILVER

The place of Sasanian silver in the history of pre-Islamic Near-Eastern art has always been a prominent one. The large collection of vessels housed in the Hermitage Museum and the smaller ones in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the British Museum in London, and the Staatliche Museen in Berlin were catalogued in the early 1900s and initiated considerable discussion and controversy.[1] The objects were chiefly accidental finds made in Armenia, the Urals, the Ukraine, Asia Minor and Iran, or purchases on the market in India and Afghanistan. Problems, therefore, existed not only concerning their date but also their place of manufacture. In recent years a large number of related silver vessels have come from clandestine excavations in Iran.[2] Because of the way in which they came to light, they have added little certain information beyond the fact of their Iranian provenance, and they have introduced the new question of authenticity.

As there is no archaeological evidence upon which to base an attribution to the Sasanian period, some of the vessels have been ascribed at one time or another to different periods and regions. Sasanian rock reliefs, stuccos, gems and coins offer parallels for many of the features found on the silver, but they differ significantly in form and design. They do not, therefore, always supply evidence that can establish with certainty the period or the culture to which the vessels should be assigned.

As the art of the Sogdian, Hephthalite and Khwarazmian centres becomes better known, the "Eastern Silver" catalogued by Orbeli and the "Sasanian Metal" studied by Orbeli and Trever have been divided into new categories.[3] Some pieces have by general agreement been dated to the beginning of the Islamic era.[4] Still, there remain a large number

[1] See the works of Smirnov, Orbeli and Trever, Dalton and Sarre in Bibliography.

[2] *MMAB* XVIII (April, 1960), p. 267; *MMAB* XXI (October, 1962), p. 83; P. O. Harper, "The Heavenly Twins", *MMAB* XXIII (January, 1965), pp. 186–95; *MMAB* XXVI (October, 1967), pp. 51–2; Dimand, "A Group of Sasanian Silver Bowls"; *Sasanian Silver*.

[3] M. M. Diakonov, "Rospisi Piandjikenta i Jivopis Srednyei Azii", in A. Y. Yakubovskii *et al.*, *Jivopis Drevnego Piandjikenta* (Moscow, 1954), pp. 130 ff; G. Azarpay, "Nine inscribed Choresmian Bowls", *Artibus Asiae* XXXI (Ascona, 1969), pp. 185–203; Marshak and Krikis, pp. 55 ff.

[4] *SPA*, p. 758; M. S. Dimand, "Review of Sasanian and Islamic Metalwork in *A Survey of Persian Art*", *AI* VIII (1941), p. 199; *Sasanian Silver*, pp. 52–3.

of "Sasanian" vessels, and the questions about this material have remained essentially the same. Why and for whom were these objects made? What information on date and sources of influence can typological, stylistic and technical factors offer?

In spite of the many recent finds of Sasanian silver made in Iran, the types of vessels are largely the same as those known a half century ago (pl. 113). There are circular plates with ring feet, having an average diameter of about 25 cm., and deep bowls of approximately the same size without feet. Both have, in general, some form of decoration on the interior surface. In rare instances the deep bowls may have an exterior rather than an interior design[1] (pl. 114). A series of smaller hemispherical bowls (average, 13 cm. in diameter) generally have designs on the outside. Ewers and vases bear representations on the pear-shaped body and, if there is one, on the lid. The ewers have short, horizontal spouts and roll mouldings at the base of the neck and on the high pedestal foot. The handle is attached to the body at the widest point, curves upward to the rim and rejoins the body below the moulding at the base of the neck. Vases with circular rims are closely related to the ewers, in the shape of the body and the presence of a roll moulding at the base of the neck. The foot is low and flat. A few other bottles and vases exist, but this is the standard form. A series of oval bowls with a crescentic longitudinal profile are decorated on the interior as well as the exterior, or on either surface alone. An example of this type is one of the few pieces of Sasanian silver known to have come from a specific site in Iran, Susa[2] (pl. 115*a*). Regrettably, there is no information about the exact circumstances of this find, made during the period in which J. de Morgan was conducting the excavations. Related in shape but more complex are elongated lobed bowls with low oval footrings. These have, in general, figural designs on the outer surface. A variation of this form, but more unusual, is a circular lobed bowl, also with a low foot. Many other vessels are undecorated or have simple facetted surfaces. For the most part they are in the shapes mentioned above. An exception is a deep bowl with a high pedestal foot and vertical fluting on the exterior of the bowl. An example in the Louvre was found by de Morgan at Susa (pl. 115*b*).[3]

To some extent the shapes appear to fall into chronological periods. The large circular bowls without feet bear designs in the style of the 3rd and 4th centuries (pl. 114). They are usually decorated with medal-

[1] *MMAB* xxviii (May, 1970), p. 394.
[2] P. Amiet, "Antiquités parthes et sassanides", *La revue du Louvre* 1967, pp. 277–8, fig. 8.
[3] *Ibid.*, fig. 9.

lions with a male or female bust. These persons do not wear crowns and are probably not divinities or rulers but members of the high nobility or members of the royal family. Only on an exceptional cup from Zargveshi do two of the medallions have busts of the king, Bahrām II.[1] The elongated lobed bowls with low feet are of a type represented in the 7th-century Sogdian wall paintings at Panjikent and appear in Iran as a result of influence from that source.[2] Stylistically the designs on them all appear to be late Sasanian. The crescentic, oval bowls may also belong to the latter part of the period, although there is less evidence upon which to base a judgement. One such vessel in bronze was found in a late Sasanian or early Islamic context at Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr in Iran.[3] The ewers are typologically similar to late antique ewers of the 4th or early 5th century.[4] The Iranian pieces are probably slightly later in date than this. The designs appear to be of the 6th or 7th century A.D. The vases with circular rims are presumably of the same period, and have late Sasanian parallels in pottery from Kish and Ctesiphon.[5]

A certain amount of information can come from a consideration of the shapes, but the representations on these vessels are the chief source of their importance. In this respect the Sasanian silver has few parallels in objects of the Seleucid and Parthian periods. The earliest picture plates in the West occur in the 1st century A.D.,[6] and might reasonably have had their influence on Near Eastern workshops after this period. A few Parthian vessels have designs with banqueting scenes,[7] and there must have been other vessels with more complex figural motifs. The social and political structure of the Parthian empire, however, probably made the commonest type of representation on Sasanian silver, described below, unlikely.

The Sasanian vessels can be divided into groups according to the

[1] See p. 1114, n. 1. Also, Dimand, "A group of Sasanian Silver Bowls", p. 12, figs. 1-4; Dalton, pl. 36. The Zargveshi cup is illustrated in Lukonin, *Persia* II, fig. 207, and in *Izvestia kavkazskogo istoriko-arkheologicheskogo institut* III (Tiflis, 1925), pl. 2.

[2] *Jivopis Drevnego Piandjikenta*, pl. 7. This is also discussed by O. Grabar in *Sasanian Silver*, p. 42.

[3] Frye (ed.), *Sasanian Remains*, p. 21, fig. 22. Y. Harada mentions the appearance of lobed cups for the first time in the T'ang period, but states that oval cups had been known for centuries in China; Y. Harada, "The Interchange of Eastern and Western Cultures", in *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* XI (Tokyo, 1939), pp. 55-7.

[4] A. Odobescu, *Le trésor de Petrossa* II (Leipzig, 1896), fig. 18a; H. Schlunk, *Kunst der Spätantike im Mittelmeerraum* (Berlin, Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, 1939), pl. 25, no. 104.

[5] R. Ettinghausen, "Parthian and Sasanian Pottery", in *SPA* p. 665, fig. 226, p. 667, n. 3; *MMAB* XXVII (August, 1932), p. 194, fig. 11.

[6] D. E. Strong, *Greek and Roman Gold and Silver Plate* (London, 1966), p. 150.

[7] *7,000 ans d'art en Iran* (Petit Palais, Paris, October–January, 1962), pl. 79, cat. 733 B.

scenes appearing on them. Of these, the most notable and the most repetitive in form are those with the king hunting or enthroned. The identification of these royal figures and the reasons for this rather extensive production have been the chief sources of controversy in the field of Sasanian silver. A second large group, the meaning of which is equally disputed, includes ewers and bottles decorated with a variety of female figures. Small, hemispherical bowls with genre or narrative scenes, wine making, games and banquets, fall in a class that has been considerably enlarged by recent discoveries in Iran.[1] Of lesser significance are the vessels with birds, animals and plants in various decorative arrangements. Only slight evidence survives of the horn-shaped rhyton terminating in an animal protome or head, popular in many earlier periods in the Near East.[2] Complete animals in silver, with holes for filling and pouring are among new finds made in Iran (pl. 99).[3]

Perhaps the most difficult questions to answer are why and for whom these vessels were made. What new elements in the social or economic structure of Sasanian Iran necessitated or encouraged an industry which is, in part, without parallel earlier in the Near East?

Obviously solutions to these problems vary according to the nature of the objects themselves. Those vessels with no figural designs or with simple ones including animals, birds or plants can be classed with the luxury ware of earlier periods. There is ample evidence in literary sources for the possession of such vessels by noble or princely families in Sasanian Iran.[4] Presentations by the king of a cup and a branch to each guest at a royal banquet may also in some instances refer to pieces of this sort.[5] The small, cast hemispherical bowls with genre or narrative scenes were probably also produced for the general consumption of the wealthy middle class that grew up at the end of the Sasanian period, and require no further special explanation. It is significant that most examples have an Iranian provenance.

The royal representations fall into a different category. Scenes of the king hunting or enthroned commonly occur on plates or bowls (there is no evidence that these subjects appeared on ewers or bottles in the

[1] *MMAB* XXIX (October, 1970), p. 63.

[2] *BCMA* LI (April, 1964), p. 88, fig. 27; LIII (October, 1966), p. 300, fig. 11.

[3] *BCMA* LIII, pp. 297, 298; *Sasanian Silver*, p. 132, fig. 49.

[4] The most recent discussion of these texts is in *Sasanian Silver*, pp. 34 ff.

[5] Moisei Kalankatuiskii, *Istoria Albania*, Book 2, chapter 1; Stephan Orbelian, *Istoria Siunika*, chapter 6; these references are taken from C. V. Trever, "Novoye 'Sasanidskoie' Bludtze Ermitaja", in *Istorii Kultury narodov Sredniei Azii* (Isdatelstvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, Moscow–Leningrad, 1960), p. 266.

Sasanian period), and much of this silver has been found outside Iran. Probably these vessels were produced for a specific purpose (pl. 18). Scenes of the king hunting animals on foot or on horseback, with spear, lasso, sword or bow are open to a variety of interpretations. Some of those proposed not only for the Sasanian scenes but for Roman and early Christian ones as well include: victory over vices and passions, with evil and death represented as wild animals;[1] the battle between the bad and good principles;[2] and the conquest of godly power over earthly power.[3] One fact is that none of the Sasanian dishes yet known shows the king fighting a human enemy. This theme occurs only on rock reliefs of the 3rd century and on one belonging to the reign of Hormizd II (A.D. 303–9). The remaining 4th century reliefs are all scenes of investiture. A single early relief at Sar Mashhad, belonging to the reign of Bahrām II (A.D. 276–93), shows the king slaying animals. The latest Sasanian reliefs at Ṭāq-i Bustān repeat the theme of investiture and the hunt (pls. 95, 96).

The rock carvings of the 3rd and 4th centuries were undoubtedly produced in response to the political situation within Iran and served to glorify the deeds of the rulers.[4] They were, however, by their nature a limited form of royal propaganda, and the need for a more easily produced and far-reaching one must have grown once the Sasanian dynasty had consolidated its position at home. The solution may well have been the silver plates. As reminders of the royal power these illustrations of victory in the more subtle and allegorical form of the hunt parallel a development that had occurred in the Roman West.[5] Hunting scenes with local royalty exist in the Near East, on rock reliefs and wall paintings of the Parthian period, but it is only in the Sasanian period that this theme appears in a form that was easily transportable, and perhaps deliberately employed to transmit a specific message.[6]

[1] E. Kitzinger, "Mosaics at Nikopolis", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* VI (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 118.

[2] Erdmann, *Kunst*, p. 89.

[3] A. I. Voshchinina, "O Sviaziakh Priuralia s Vostokom, VI–VII*vv* n.e.", *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya* XVII (Moscow, 1953), p. 190.

[4] Borisov and Lukonin, pp. 16 ff.

[5] R. Brilliant, "Gesture and Rank in Roman Art", in *Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences* XIV (1963), pp. 143, 186. By the end of the 3rd century, on hunt sarcophagi, weapons were no longer held by the central figure, who simply raised his hand in victory, and was isolated "from the insecurities of action". To a lesser degree, the same development occurs in Sasanian hunts and the scenes are transformed from direct attack on the part of the royal figure to simple chase.

[6] O. Grabar in *Sasanian Silver*, pp. 53, 78, first equated the Sasanian hunt with the "expression of royal power" and noted its occurrence on transportable objects for external rather than internal use within the empire. Such vessels must, however, have been sent

The rock relief of Bahrām II at Sar Mashhad indicates that at this point the hunt had assumed major importance as a royal theme and was no longer relegated to the decoration of palace walls. It is to this king also, as heir apparent, that the earliest hunting plate, from Krasnaya Polyana (pl. 116), is attributed.[1]

If the suggestion is that representations of the king hunting had such political overtones and that they complemented and may have indeed supplanted the more limited form of royal propaganda illustrated by the rock reliefs, then there should be a group of plates dating from the late 3rd century into the middle of the 5th. Later in the 5th century, it is probable that the production diminished. The power of the king in the middle of the 5th century lessened as that of the nobility grew and, with the advent of the unfortunate Pērōz (A.D. 459), a period of almost fifty years began in which natural as well as human causes drastically weakened the Iranian empire. The defeat of this king by the Hephthalite armies and the depletion of the royal treasury in payment of ransom for the release of his hostage son Kavād was followed by the death in battle of Pērōz himself (A.D. 484). The support by Kavād (A.D. 488–97; 499–531) of the Mazdakite movement in an effort to weaken the power of the old nobility resulted in a further period of chaos and instability which forced this king, at one point, from his throne. A series of natural catastrophes around the year A.D. 500 produced such severe famine that Kavād again had to draw on the royal treasury to satisfy internal needs. Only his final aggressive policy against the West served to enrich the country once again and allowed the growth of a strong central power in Iran.[2] A period then followed of expanded production indicated by the sharp increase in the number of mints producing coins, and general prosperity was achieved through social and political reform. At this point, sometime after 500 and more particularly with the advent of Khusrau I (A.D. 531), vessels with royal hunts were probably once

around within the Sasanian kingdom for political reasons as well as exported outside the boundaries. Presumably it is to this type of vessel that Flavius Vopiscus, a contemporary of Diocletian, refers when he mentions that such gifts were received by the Romans from the beginning of the 4th century; Sarre, *Die Kunst des alten Persien*, p. 49.

[1] V. G. Lukonin, *Iran v epokhu pervikh Sasanidov* (Leningrad, 1961), pp. 56 ff; A. D. H. Bivar suggests that the lion hunt at Sar Mashhad may be an allegorical representation of the defeat of two enemies of Bahrām II: Hormizd who sought to take the Iranian throne from the East, and the emperor Carus, who came from the West, almost reaching Ctesiphon: see A. D. H. Bivar, "Cavalry equipment and tactics on the Euphrates frontier", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* XXVI (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), p. 280.

[2] N. Pigulevskaya, *Les villes de l'état iranien* (Paris, 1963), pp. 206 ff; C. V. Trever, "Sasanian Coinage. B. Artistic Character", *SPA*, pp. 825–6.

again produced in quantity. In the final years of Sasanian rule, as the Arabs gradually carved away this empire, the kings may easily have continued the tradition of making such plates in support of the fiction of their actual sovereignty over their former territories or in imitation of their more fortunate predecessors. There is some evidence that much later rulers renewed this practice although their vessels, while based on Sasanian models, are entirely different in style.[1]

It is obvious that support for such a hypothesis is dependent on establishing an exact chronology for the existing silver vessels. At present this cannot be done and in the section below, devoted to problems of style, it will be apparent how complex the matter is and how slight the absolute data of a chronological nature.[2] It is evident, however, that a few plates, later in date than those showing non-royal persons hunting,[3] illustrate royal crown types as well as stylistic and formal developments that suggest an attribution to specific Sasanian kings: Shāpūr II (pl. 17),[4] Yazdgard I (pl. 117). Somewhat more problematical are other plates showing kings whose crowns include, in most instances, a cap surmounted by a crescent cradling a globe, and decorated along the base with one or more crenellations and possibly another crescent.[5] In a few instances wings are also included. As far as the coins can supply evidence for the dates of these vessels, the range extends from Yazdgard II to the last kings of the Sasanian dynasty, with considerable duplication in the crowns except for the most minor details. At least one vessel can be attributed to the late Sasanian period on the basis of form and style (pl. 118).[6] but there are a few that have been assigned to the reigns of Pērōz and Kavād.[7] Our knowledge of the chronological development of the silver plates is hardly precise enough to point conclusively to one of these rulers rather than another. If a

[1] Orbeli and Trever, pl. 17. For a discussion of the continuity of Sasanian traditions and the revival of Sasanian royal iconography in early Islamic times, see C. E. Bosworth, "The Heritage of Rulership in early Islamic Iran and the Search for Dynastic connections with the Past", *Iran* XI (1973), pp. 51–62.

[2] P. Harper, *The Royal Hunter* (Asia House Gallery, 1978), pp. 24–78.

[3] R. Ghirshman, *Iran*, figs. 250, 251; Lukonin, *Iran*, pl. XI. From the time of Shāpūr II on, only royal figures appear on Sasanian hunting plates.

[4] Erdmann, *Kunst*, pl. 60.

[5] *BCMA* LI (April, 1964), p. 76, figs. 15 E, F.

[6] Erdmann, *Kunst*, pl. 67; *SPA*, p. 719 and pl. 239A.

[7] Marshak and Krikis, p. 65. These include (*a*) the plate in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accession no. 34.33 (Erdmann, *Kunst*, pl. 63), (*b*) the Chilek plate and (*c*) the Tcherdyne plate in the Hermitage (Lukonin, *Persia* II, fig. 143). In none of these instances is the attribution to Pērōz universally accepted.

comparison with the coins is made, only the presence of one rather than two lines of beading at the base of the crowns distinguishes those of Pērōz and Kavād from that of Khusrau I.[1] Some vessels were undoubtedly made in the period of national catastrophe covering the reign of Pērōz and part of the reign of Kavād, but a widespread production is to be doubted. Much more likely is the melting down of such objects to produce the needed revenue, since there is no evidence that the plates themselves could have served as a form of currency.

If the promotion of a political ideology lies behind the subject of the royal hunt, then it is to be supposed that other scenes with royal personages also carried some specific message and served other than purely decorative purposes. This has already been suggested for the scene on the plate in the Hermitage with Khusrau I enthroned and accompanied by four non-royal figures who have been identified as the *spāhbad*s of the newly divided empire (pl. 118). A royal hunt is placed beneath this primary scene, but it is a minor element and almost suggests the decoration of the palace walls rather than an allegorical scene with political overtones. The crown of the king simply has crenellations. A small flying bird is placed before the king's horse, and is typical of the variation or elaboration of a standard theme which occurs on many late Sasanian plates.

Another quite different series of vessels has been interpreted by some scholars as having a religious rather than a political meaning and purpose. A number of silver vases and ewers have representations of women holding a limited and repetitive group of objects: vessels, animals, birds, plants and fruit (pl. 119).[2] If there is a connection with the cult of Anāhitā, and this cannot be proven, then a date for the appearance of these vessels could coincide with the first centuries of Sasanian rule[3] or with the renewed popularity of her cult in the 6th

[1] R. Göbl, *Sasanian Numismatics* (Brunswick, 1971), tables ix, x, xi.

[2] All vessels with female figures are sometimes incorrectly classed together as a single type. Because of the nature of the objects held by the females described here it has been suggested that they are derived from Western representations of the Seasons and Months and may have had a similar significance in Iran, perhaps being connected with seasonal festivals. G. M. A. Hanfmann, *The Season Sarcophagus in Dumbarton Oaks* I (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 211; P. O. Harper, "Sources of certain female representations in Sasanian art", in *La Persia nel Medioevo*, a congress held by the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei (Rome, 1971), p. 507. The type is also illustrated and discussed by D. G. Shepherd in *BCMA* LI (April, 1964); by R. Ettinghausen "A Persian Treasure", *Arts in Virginia* VIII (1967–8), pp. 28ff; by Grabar in *Sasanian Silver*, p. 60; by Carter, "Royal Festal Themes". These studies include many forms of female representations.

[3] Lukonin, *Persia II*, p. 182. The author states his belief that the vessels should fall in the reign of Shāpūr II, whose chief priest, Aturpat, "transformed the nature cult of Anahita".

century A.D. The latter would agree better with this author's opinion of the date of these pieces.

It is apparent that any real understanding of the meaning of the various scenes on Sasanian silver vessels or of the purpose which lay behind their production is closely bound to the problem of their date and style. Here there is almost no archaeological support for the theories which have been proposed. The vessels from Susa are without stratigraphic context and are only simply decorated. The excavation of a site at Chilek near Samarqand, where four silver vessels were found, occurred only after the find had been made, accidentally, by a well-digger and the mound partially bulldozed.[1] A *terminus ante quem* for these pieces, one of which is Sasanian in style, appears to be sometime in the beginning of the 7th century. All other finds of Sasanian silver on Soviet soil, as far as is known, have been fortuitous. Consequently, there is almost no external evidence, apart from the royal crowns as they appear on Sasanian coins, for the dating of the individual pieces. The inscriptions on certain vessels are generally in a late form of Pahlavī or Sogdian script. Some may be contemporary with the objects on which they occur, but a 3rd century vessel in the Hermitage has a Sogdian inscription of the 6th to 7th century and a 4th-century plate in the same museum has one of the 4th or 5th century. Neither indicates the date of manufacture.[2] Rare instances of early Pahlavī inscriptions are those on a vessel from Krasnaya Polyana, on a plate found at Mtskheta, and on a bowl allegedly found in Iran.[3]

Internal evidence for the dating of Sasanian silver, the nature of the composition, the treatment of certain details and the method of fabrication, has produced essentially two theories, the first advocated by German scholars,[4] the second by Russian.[5] The former outlines a

[1] Marshak and Krikis, p. 55.

[2] Lukonin, *Persia II*, pl. 37, p. 215, pl. 147, p. 222. For other inscriptions on silver vessels see V. A. Livshits and V. G. Lukonin, "Srednepersidskiye i Sogdiyskiye Nadpisi", *VDI* 1964.3, pp. 155–76; Brunner, "Middle Persian Inscriptions".

[3] Lukonin, *Iran*, pp. 58–9. For the Mtskheta inscription see W. B. Henning, "A Sassanian silver bowl from Georgia", *BSOAS* XXIV (1961), pp. 353–6. The bowl from Iran in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accession no. 1970.5, is published by P. O. Harper, "Sasanian Medallion Bowls with Human Busts" with a note on the inscription by C. J. Brunner, in D. Kouymjian (ed.), *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of George C. Miles* (Beirut, 1974), pp. 65–6, 81.

[4] K. Erdmann, "Die sasanidischen Jagdschalen", in *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* LVII (1936), pp. 193 ff; K. Erdmann, "Zur Chronologie der sassanidischen 'Jagdschalen'", *ZDMG* XCVII (1943), pp. 239–83.

[5] Orbeli and Trever, *Orfèvrerie sasanide*; J. Orbeli, "Sasanian and Early Islamic Metalwork", in *SPA* pp. 716 ff; Marshak and Krikis, pp. 55 ff.

continuous development, the second proposes a division into separate schools. In both instances the emphasis has been on the plates with royal hunts. General stages in an overall development, as analysed by Erdmann, are still in many instances convincing. It is, however, impossible to fit such changes in form or design into a close chronological scheme, and in different regions there may have been a number of variations. Still the evidence indicates, as Erdmann originally noted, that there is a trend from a simple compositional scheme toward a more complex or varied one, and that the final return to a scene consisting of only a few elements is, in a sense, an archaism. The earliest hunts take the form of a direct attack, while slightly later the animals are all in flight or dead beneath the horse's hooves. The king's head moves from pure profile to a three-quarters view and returns to the profile position in most cases on the later plates. A final stage is the appearance on some late or post-Sasanian plates of the full front face.[1] Technically, those plates with many separate pieces fitted into the background shell to form almost complete figures in high relief are common from the 3rd to the 5th centuries. In the final phase of Sasanian art, the evidence generally suggests that this method was rarely used and that fewer pieces were added, resulting in a cruder, less subtle appearance. Erdmann considered all of the simple, engraved or chased designs late or post-Sasanian, but this cannot be as readily accepted. There is evidence on some of these that the pattern was first dotted onto the surface from another "model", perhaps in leather,[2] a technique which only suggests that these vessels were made in peripheral regions. There is no reason, if the royal crown and the stylistic and formal evidence do not prove otherwise, why this could not have been a common practice over a long period of time.

[1] Orbeli and Trever, pls. 3, 15; J. Fukai and K. Horiuchi, *Taq-i-Bustan* I (Tokyo, 1969, The Tokyo University Iraq–Iran Archaeological Expedition, Report 10). On the rock reliefs of the side walls at Ṭāq-i Bustān, the king's head is almost full face although he is shown shooting with a bow and arrow to the right (pl. 46). The king's head is only shown full front when his horse is standing in a three-quarters position, probably also intended to be full face (pl. 87). This could mean that the hunting plates on which the king faces straight outward are slightly later in date than this rock relief. The frontal head is rare on coins. It only appears on silver coins of Khusrau II and on gold issues of Bahrām IV, Kavād I, and Khusrau I and II; Göbl, pp. 6, 7. In the West, there was a similar development culminating in the "fixed frontal image" in the late 3rd century; Brilliant, "Gesture and Rank in Roman Art", p. 204.

[2] Marshak and Krikis, p. 59. The plate in the British Museum with a king wearing a crown decorated with bull's horns may have been made in the same way; Dalton, pl. XXXVII. The technique is more apparent on a so-called Sasanian vessel in the Hermitage as well as on Byzantine vessels in the same museum; Orbelli and Trever, pl. 9; L. Matzulewitsch, *Byzantinische Antike* (Berlin–Leipzig, 1929), pls. 23–5.

The most recent discussion of the theory of particular groups or schools has centred on the Chilek "Sasanian" plate. The drapery worn by the royal figure is in a linear style typical of a number of vessels of varying date. These have been placed in a group, together with several pieces lacking this particular feature, but including other details which provide links between them all. The whole group spreads over a period of some two hundred years.[1] Among the vessels assigned to this group only the plates with the distinctive parallel-line or rippled drapery seem sufficiently close to suggest a single tradition. Of these, two 4th-century examples, one (pl. 120) in the British Museum[2] and the other in the Hermitage,[3] are from Iran and the Perm respectively. None the less, they are clearly related in style and technique. Both are made by adding separate pieces to a background shell. All other examples in this group have designs chased or engraved on the interior surface, and the linear stylization of the drapery is somewhat different from that on the earlier pieces. The vessels with known provenances are from Chilek near Samarkand and Tiflis in Georgia,[4] and their date depends on the identification of the king represented on them. Dating of the crowns is problematical since they are either incomplete or of an unrecorded type; they may therefore date, at the earliest, to the second reign of Pērōz (A.D. 459–84) and, at the latest, to the end of the Sasanian period or to the years after its collapse.[5] Whether these simple engraved works are to be considered part of a continuous tradition or whether they are locally made products copying still preserved works of the 4th century such as the British Museum and Hermitage plates mentioned above is open to question. Apart from the British Museum plate (pl. 120), the vessels in the parallel-line tradition illustrate crowns that are not known Sasanian types. It is, therefore, difficult to be confident that they are Sasanian rather than provincial works of art.

More certainly Sasanian are plates with images of kings wearing crowns identical to those on the coins. These plates, in general, share various stylistic, iconographic and technical features: the means of depicting the drapery folds as short paired lines; the method of representing the coats of animals; the application of the gilding over all of

[1] Marshak and Krikis, pp. 62 ff.
[2] Dalton, pl. XXXVI.
[3] Orbeli and Trever, pl. 4.
[4] *Ibid.*, pl. 14.
[5] The king on the plate, originally in the collection of General Sir Alexander Cunningham and now in the British Museum, wears a crown consistently identified as that of Bahrām V. The crescent is in reality two bull's horns (see n. 2 opposite) and consequently this identification is incorrect. This plate, although of higher quality, is sufficiently close to the Chilek plate to suggest a single workshop for the two.

the design or, on late examples, over all the background; the means of achieving relief.[1] Official state workshops may well have been responsible for the regimented production of the vessels in this category. In other categories of silver plates that lack royal images, the figural and plant designs are only occasionally similar enough in style and execution to indicate that they may be products of a single workshop.[2]

The most reliable method of establishing the date of Sasanian silver is through an analysis of small iconographical details. This has been done in part by those who have studied the coins and gems, noting the initial appearance of certain elements in the portrayal of human busts.[3] These include double pendants placed one beside the other (Ardashīr III) and a pair of double pendants suspended from an earring (first reign of Pērōz). On the coins there is clearly a trend toward a richer ornamentation of the body as time passes. Regrettably, the issues of the later Sasanian kings are often so poor in quality that it is difficult to decipher the designs. The earliest occurrence of a stem under the globe rising from the king's head, and of a crescent resting on one of the king's shoulders is apparently on the first issue of Kavād. All these minor details indicate the general period to which a plate with such features might be assigned. It is possible, however, that changes in dress or ornament appeared somewhat earlier on the plates than on the coins or, in reverse, that the older modes persisted in use for a time.

In establishing a chronology for Sasanian silver, much emphasis falls on a comparison between the figures on the plates and the royal images on Sasanian coins. Yet there are many instances where, in a small detail or in the overall form, the crowns on Sasanian dynastic monuments such as the rock reliefs do not match those on the coins.[4] It is apparent,

[1] These are only a few of the features common to this group that includes among other vessels, the following: *SPA*, pls. 209, 211, 213; *Sasanian Silver*, fig. 10.

[2] C. V. Trever, *Nouveaux plats sasanides de l'Ermitage* (Moscow–Leningrad, 1937), p. 28. Trever notes the similarity between the vessel with an eagle grasping a female (pl. 3) and a plate in the Hermitage with a striding tiger (Orbelli and Trever, pl. 27). Another group in which the vessels share the border design, the decorative pattern of dots on the animal bodies and the banding of the birds' wings and necks include a hemispherical bowl from Ufa with an eagle attacking a gazelle (Voshchinina, pp. 183ff), and the circular lobed bowl in the Hermitage (Orbeli and Trever, pl. 37).

[3] Borisov and Lukonin, pp. 12 ff; Marshak and Krikis, pp. 64 ff.

[4] Such figures appear on two reliefs at Naqsh-i Rustam, one at Bishāpūr, and one at Dārāb. Shāpūr III in the small aivān, as well as the figure in the large aivān at Ṭāq-i Bustān, wear "incorrect" crowns. Göbl attributes the relief in the large aivān at Ṭāq-i Bustān to Khusrau II although the king on the back wall of the aivān does not wear this king's crown. He also notes the absence of earflaps on all the reliefs of Shāpūr I in spite of the fact that this is a constant feature on the coins; Göbl, p. 85, footnote 49a.

therefore, that throughout the Sasanian period, various forms of royal headgear existed other than those on the coins. The vertically-ribbed globe rising above the crown on some silver plates, and the ram's horn headdress on the 4th-century plate in the Hermitage Museum, have parallels on Kushano-Sasanian and Kidarite coins, and the adoption of these features has, consequently, been seen as an indication of a connection with the region east of Iran.[1] A provincial origin may also explain the presence of other unique crowns on so-called Sasanian silver vessels.[2] Arab-Sasanian coins offer no parallels for these problematical crowns as they follow the issues of Khusrau II and Yazdgard III.

Although the presence of a Sasanian crown type is a significant element in the design, it does not necessarily prove that a plate is of Sasanian workmanship. Sasanian coins were widely imitated by other peoples both during the period and after the fall of the dynasty. The princes of Georgia in the 6th and 7th centuries copied the coins of Hormizd IV, as did the Arabs, although only rarely in the latter instance. To the East, the crown of the 8th-century Bukhārā princes is that of Bahrām V, whose coins were common in this region as a result of the battles against the Hephthalites.[3] Later rulers, such as the Buyids, were no longer imitating in detail the crowns of their Sasanian predecessors, and chose greatly simplified versions that are unlike the variations under consideration here.[4] The crown type remains an important factor for establishing the date and classification of Sasanian royal vessels but the matter is more complex than was once believed.

Less can be said about the remaining categories of Sasanian silver. The vases, ewers, bowls and plates with birds attacking their prey, single animals, birds in vine scrolls or roundels, patterns of lozenges filled with a variety of animals or birds and elaborate populated vines (pl. 113) are harder to associate with firmly dated material. For the most part, an attribution to a specific period is based on the shape of the vessel itself or the form of the plant ornament. The rock carvings

[1] R. Göbl, "Die Münzprägung der Kušan von Vima Kadphises bis Bahram IV" in F. Altheim, R. Stiehl, *Finanzgeschichte der Spätantike* (Frankfurt am Main, 1957), Münztafel 15, p. 419; M. F. C. Martin, "Coins of Kidara and the Little Kushans", *JRASB*, 3rd series, III (1937), pp. 23N–50N, pls. 1, 2; O. Maenchen-Helfen, "Crenelated Mane and Scabbard Slide", *Central Asiatic Journal* III (1957–8), pp. 111 ff.

[2] Marshak and Krikis, figs. 3, 4 (Chilek plate); Dalton, pl. xxxvii.

[3] J. Walker, *A Catalogue of the Arab-Sassanian Coins* (London, 1941), pp. xxvi, xxxvii, lxxxiv; for Arab imitations of Hormizd IV see pp. 24, 178.

[4] M. Bahrami, "A gold medal in the Freer Gallery of Art", in G. C. Miles (ed.), *Archaeologica Orientalia in memoriam Ernst Herzfeld* (New York, 1952), pp. 5–20; G. C. Miles, "A Portrait of the Buyid Prince Rukn al-Dawlah", *ANSMN* XI, pp. 283 ff.

of the great aivān at Ṭāq-i Bustān and the far less certainly dated stuccos from Mesopotamian and Iranian sites provide some comparable material. Certain details such as the foliation of parts of the animal bodies, the sharply trianglular outline of the eyes of animals, and a method of tooling particularly used on plants, which produces a short line ending in a pronounced dot, do not occur on vessels of the 3rd to 6th centuries;[1] they point to a date at the end of the Sasanian period. At this time, there was probably an increased production of such vessels for the wealthy, landowning class. The subsequent decline in technique is apparent in the rarity of objects made by adding a number of separate pieces to the background shell, and in the preference for simple repoussé or carving to achieve relief.

A certain repetition is to be expected in scenes of enthronement, banqueting or the hunt, but it is often the case with these works of lesser importance that there is an almost exact duplication of design as well.[2] This indicates a degree of organization in the craft that must have been considerable by the end of the Sasanian period. As early as the reign of Shāpūr II there are indications that artisans were grouped in administrative units.[3] An official chosen by the king served as the chief of the craftsmen, and his duties included the inspection of centres of artisans in all parts of Iran. By the late Sasanian period, this fourth class of the citizenry was doubtless even more regulated, and craftsmen outside the royal centres were as subject to certain controls as those more skilled, who worked directly for the king. The resulting standardization is apparent in the coins and gems as well. There is nothing in the surviving Sasanian silver to indicate the presence of individual artists creating and executing their own designs. Rather, there is a repetition of forms and motifs, in many instances not unique to Iran but part of a general eastern Mediterranean repertory in the first half of the first millennium A.D.

[1] Orbeli and Trever, pls. 15, 27, 28, 38, 48; Erdmann, *Kunst*, pls. 65, 72; *SPA*, pl. 135.

[2] A hemispherical bowl from Ufa has a design with an eagle grasping a gazelle (Voshchinina, pp. 183 ff). In design this vessel is closely related to a plate in the Art Gallery, Perm, with the same motif (V. Y. Leshchenko, "Sasanidskoye Blyudo Permskoy Khudojestvennoy Galerey", *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya* 1966 2, pp. 317–19) and to two vessels in the Hermitage (Orbeli and Trever, pls. 39, 40). A vase with a geometric design in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (*MMAB* xxi (October, 1962), p. 83) has an exact parallel in The Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., accession no. 64.3. A plate in the Moscow State Historical Museum (A. P. Smirnov, "Novaya Nakhodka Vostochnogo Serebra v Priuralye", *Gosudarstvennogo Istoricheskogo Muzeya* xxv (Moscow, 1957), pp. 8 ff) has almost a duplicate, in slightly different style, in The Freer Gallery of Art; (Ettinghausen, "A Persian Treasure", p. 38, fig. 17).

[3] Pigulevskaya, *Villes*, pp. 159 ff.

The West must have initially supplied the impetus for the production of "propaganda court silver" in the East, and was undoubtedly the source for numerous designs as well as techniques throughout the Sasanian period. The result was a series of formulae which appear on the Antioch mosaics and Byzantine and early Christian silver vessels as well as on works of art from Sasanian Iran. The positions of dead animals, the "gladiatorial pose", the hunter grasping the cub as the lioness leaps toward him are only a few of such copybook motifs.[1] Shapes of some Sasanian vessels such as the ewer and high-footed fluted bowl (pl. 116*b*)[2] and the fashion of using niello for inlays, are equally signs of interconnections with the West. Looking to the East, there are the oval, lobed bowls of the 6th or early 7th century which owe their shape and, in many examples, the style of their decoration to Central Asian and Indian sources. It is possible, too, that the taste for small, hemispherical bowls bearing narrative scenes on the exterior surface grew out of a familiarity with such works as the Graeco-Bactrian bowls of the 4th to 6th centuries.

The methods of fabrication used for Sasanian silver vessels are another reflection of foreign customs and modes.[3] The most elaborate of the techniques of manufacture, and one of the earliest, is the process most often referred to as double shell. In fact, there is no certainly Sasanian vessel made from two complete plates of metal, one designed to mask the pattern beaten up from the reverse of the other. This form of construction is common in the West in late antiquity.[4] It has been incorrectly claimed that a vessel of Hephthalite manufacture was made in this fashion,[5] but the technique apparently had as little

[1] The characteristic pose for dead animals in Sasanian art is with one hindleg and one foreleg extended and one hindleg and one foreleg bent under the body. This pose is used with the same meaning on the Antioch mosaics. The scene of the horseman grasping a tigress's cub occurs on the well-known Worcester Hunt mosaic; D. Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* I, II (Princeton 1947), p. 365, pls. LVII, LXIV, CLXXII. Similarly depicted dead animals appear much earlier on Assyrian reliefs of the early first millennium B.C. Such formulae may be based on actual observation, but the continued use of a particular stylization with a specific meaning over such a long period of time is surprising; R. D. Barnett, *Assyrian Palace Reliefs* (London [1960]), fig. 127.

[2] Strong, p. 204, pl. 66A.

[3] The most accurate recent description of some of the techniques used in the fabrication of Sasanian silver is found in W. T. Chase, "The Technical Examination of Two Sasanian Silver Plates", *Ars Orientalis*, VII (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1968), p. 75.

[4] Strong, pp. 135 ff.

[5] Marshak and Krikis, p. 60. In China the use of hammering instead of casting to form vessels of the T'ang period has been called a result of Sasanian influence. The purpose, in China, of using two shells for vessels was to conserve silver; B. Gyllensvärd, *T'ang Gold and Silver* (Göteborg, 1957), pp. 29 ff. X-ray examination has now proved that the Chilek bowl is not double shell as stated by Marshak and Krikis.

popularity in Central Asia as in Iran. On Sasanian plates only parts of the design, those in high relief, are separate pieces of metal. These were repoussé or carved and were fitted under a lip cut up from the background shell. The rest of the design on the plate itself is slightly worked in relief or chased. It is possible that the Sasanians adopted this form of metalworking from the Roman West, where in the 2nd and 3rd centuries cast parts are set into vessels.[1] The existence of a similar technique, however, is known in Asia Minor as early as the mid-first millennium B.C.[2]

There is no evidence that any Sasanian vessels were cast in their final form, including the relief decoration. On an example of the late 3rd century, the plate from Krasnaya Polyana, the joins between the parts of the mould, said to exist on the reverse, are not, in fact, visible.[3] There is also no sign that the many vessels with designs at a single raised level were cast.[4] This appears to have been achieved in most examples by carving the background away, as was done on Roman silver vessels.[5] In every instance the details were added by the use of a variety of tools after the design in its main outline was complete.

The gilding, which is preserved on the majority of the vessels, was generally applied with a mercury amalgam although gold leaf is not unknown (pl. 99).[6] Niello is, in contrast, rare on Sasanian works. It occurs on a bottle with female figures in the Hermitage Museum, and on a plate in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (pl. 18), both dated by some scholars as early as the 5th century A.D.[7] Two plates having niello in the Hermitage collection are at least as late as the 7th century.[8] Other vessels with niello ornament are a pointed oval bowl and two oval,

[1] Harper, "The Heavenly Twins", p. 189.

[2] A. D. H. Bivar, "A rosette *phialē* inscribed in Aramaic', *BSOAS* XXIV (1961), pp. 189–99.

[3] These comments on methods of manufacture are based on the examination of Sasanian silver in the Soviet Union, Europe and the United States by myself and Pieter Meyers, Research Chemist at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. S. Fajans, "Recent Russian Literature", *Ars Orientalis* II (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1957), pp. 60ff.

[4] *MMAB* XVIII (April, 1960), p. 267, fig. 32. The dots on the interior of this bowl were produced by tooling on the exterior. The punched depressions are still visible on the raised part of the exterior design. Where the background around this exterior design has been carved away, these punch marks can no longer be seen. The same method may have been used on the vessel in The Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Chase, "Two Sasanian Silver Plates", p. 91).

[5] Strong, p. 180.

[6] *BCMA* LIII (October, 1966), p. 291.

[7] Orbeli and Trever, pl. 46; Erdmann, *Kunst*, pl. 63.

[8] Orbeli and Trever, pls. 15, 16. The date is indicated by a comparison of the position and shape of the head and the treatment of the beard and moustache with that of the royal figure in the hunting reliefs of the large aivān at Ṭaq-i Bustān.

lobed bowls, both types probably to be dated to the 6th-7th century A.D.[1] Three circular bowls with female figures and niello inlaid hearts are dated by an inscription giving their weight to the 8th century.[2] Since there is no indication that niello occurs on objects of Central Asian manufacture, the source for this form of decoration must be Byzantium, where it was extensively used, with gilding, in the 4th and 5th centuries.[3] On Sasanian vessels the niello is occasionally modelled in relief, although it is also employed in the fashion typical in the West, to fill specially prepared and cut-out areas, remaining flush with the surface.

The debt of Sasanian silver to both East and West is great, and it is surprising in a period of such vigorous international exchange and interconnection that anything unique remained. Yet this is clearly the case. Some vessels can be considered the work of Byzantine craftsmen and others may be attributed to Guptan India, but a large majority bear the unmistakable stamp of Sasanian workmanship. This is partly a matter of style, of form and design. It is certainly more than the appearance of various details of dress or equipment. Whether this is a specifically Iranian culture or whether there is a Mesopotamian element as well is impossible to determine without more archaeological data. The silver vessels indicate only that there flourished under, or in spite of, rigid controls, a school of metalworking, reflecting trends current in the late antique world, but distinctive enough to be identified as Sasanian.

[1] *Sasanian Silver*, pl. 28 now in the Norbert Schimmel Collection; S. Fukai, *Study of Iranian Art and Archaeology* (Tokyo, 1968), pls. 42–8; *Trésors de l'ancien Iran* (Musée Rath, Geneva, 1966), pl. 77, cat. no. 681, now in the Abegg-Stiftung, Bern.

[2] Fajans, pp. 77 ff. For a dating in the 8th century because of the weights used in the inscriptions, see W. B. Henning, "New Pahlavi inscriptions on silver vessels", *BSOAS* XXII (1959), pp. 132–4.

[3] Strong, pp. 195, 198–9.

CHAPTER 30

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTS IN TRANSOXIANA

I

In the Persian epic Firdausī portrayed his conception of the ancient past as a tripartite world in which Iran and Tūrān interacted as the principal antagonists. Tūrān, or Transoxiana, was there vaguely defined as the area between the Oxus River and Khotan "on the frontiers of China". *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam* gives a more detailed geographical picture of Transoxiana in the 10th century: "The Marches (*ḥudūd*) of Transoxiana are scattered districts, some lying to the east of Transoxiana, and some to the west of it. East of the Eastern Marches of Transoxiana are the borders of Tibet and Hindūstān; south of them, the [Marches] of Khurāsān; west of them, the borders of Chaghāniyān; and north of them, the borders of Surūshana which belong to Transoxiana . . . This is a vast, prosperous, and very pleasant country. It is the Gate of Turkestan and a resort of merchants."[1] Today Transoxiana would be the roughly rectangular area between the Āmū Daryā (Oxus) and the Syr Daryā (Jaxartes) rivers, which flow into the Aral Sea from the Pamir and Tien Shan mountain ranges respectively.

In antiquity the river boundaries of Transoxiana were neither impassable barriers nor isolating features. The lower course of the Āmū Daryā, which lies in the Turkmen plain, is accessible from the flatlands surrounding the Aral Sea. The middle course of the river rises northeast of Marv (Murghāb valley), and its upper course forms the present-day borders between Afghanistan and the Soviet republics of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan as far as Badakhshān in the Pamir range. The lower course of the Syr Darya passes from the southern shores of the Aral Sea through flat plains (Soviet Kazakhstan), rising rapidly east of Tashkent and along the Farghāna basin, fed by headwaters in the Tien Shan range in Soviet Kirghizia.

[1] *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam*, pp. 119, 112. To facilitate cross-reference with Russian sources some Central Asian place names are here transcribed directly from the Cyrillic. The Cyrillic soft and hard sounds have been omitted in the transcription of Russian terms.

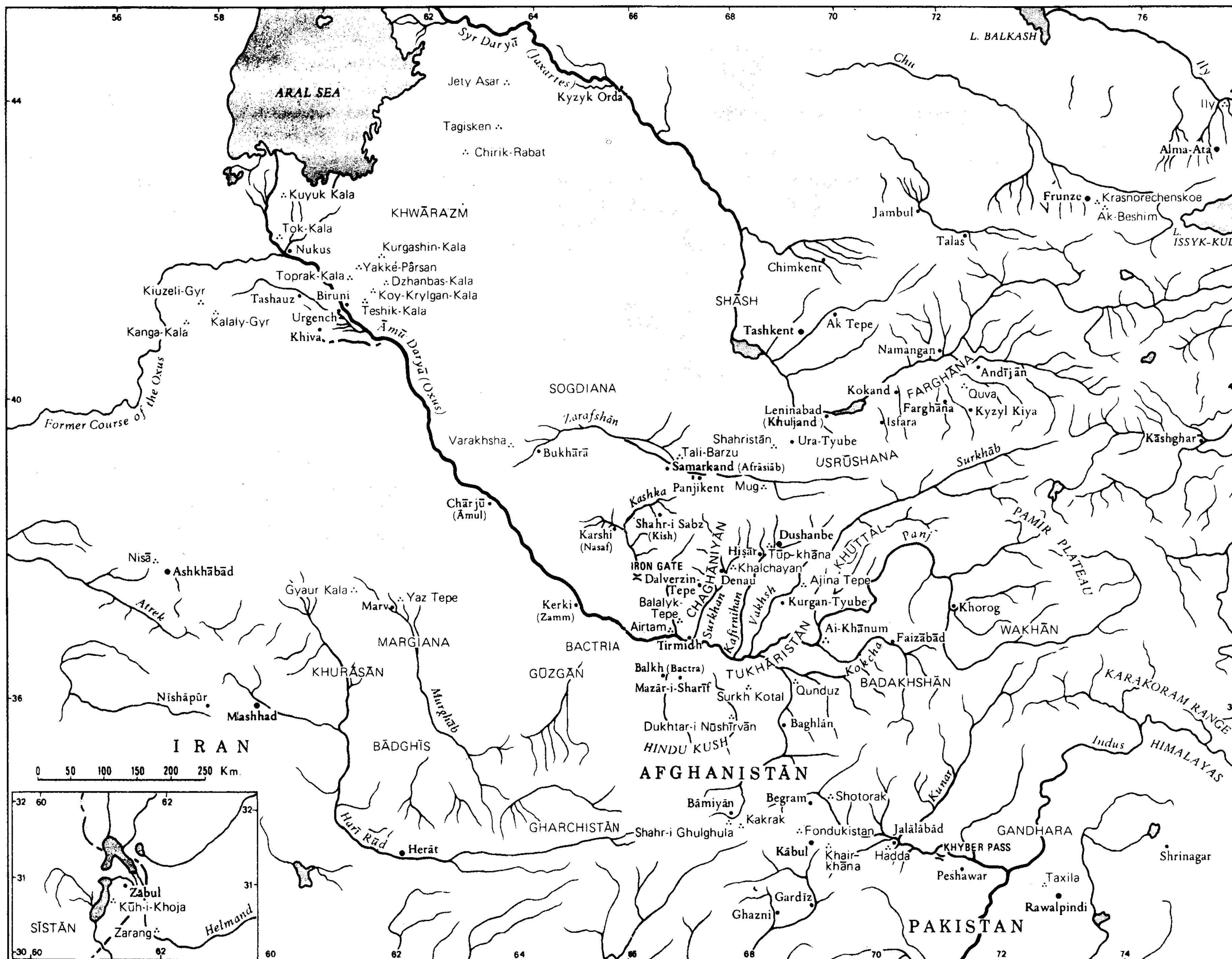
Recent scholarship and excavations in Central Asia have lent substance to the legendary civilization of Transoxiana, and have considerably enlarged our frame of reference since the beginning of the 20th century when the Russian orientalist V. V. Barthold wrote, "Nearly all we know about Central Asia between the 2nd century B.C. and the 7th century A.D. has been extracted from Chinese sources."[1] The cultural development of Transoxiana from the 3rd century B.C. until the Muslim period was closely connected with three, or possibly four, known linguistic entities that may be associated with definite geographical areas. Choresmian (Khwarazmian), Sogdian and Bactrian, all three Middle Iranian languages, constituted the native speech of Khwārazm in the delta region, Sogdiana (Zarafashān and Kashka Daryā basins, north of the Hiṣār range), and Bactria or Kushān Tukhāristān (both banks of the Āmū Daryā along its middle course). Aramaic letters were used in a fourth script, tentatively identified as the "Farghāna" script by V. A. Livshits, who would date it to the 5th or 6th century B.C.[2]

Archaeological discoveries in Transoxiana suggest a twofold relationship between Iran and its eastern neighbours in the early Middle Ages. While the art and architecture of Transoxiana display stylistic, thematic and typological links with the traditions of Parthian and Sasanian Iran, there are distinctive differences between them. A strong secular trend generally pervades the art and architecture of Sogdiana and distinguishes this tradition from that of Buddhist and Hindu India and the official canons of the court art of Iran. This secular trend in the folk art of Transoxiana resulted in a complex and brilliant series of narrative wall-paintings that have been uncovered in both public and domestic structures in several Sogdian town sites. In Sogdiana the pageantry and style of a feudalistic society are portrayed in an artistic idiom that combines local and borrowed elements in a highly original manner. The extent of the influence of this distinctive and secular tradition of painting on the development of miniature painting in Muslim times is still undetermined. However, the stylistic and iconographic links between the two suggest the existence of Sogdian antecedents for some of the artistic formulas found in the later miniature painting tradition.

The heroic and episodic character of the Sogdian murals appears to

[1] Barthold, "A Short History", p. 4.
[2] Reported by V. A. Livshits in an oral communication in October 1968.

‘The map which appears here in the printed edition has been removed for ease of use and now appears as an additional resource on the chapter overview page’.



Map 16. Map of Transoxiana showing the distribution of ancient and early mediaeval sites.

reflect the same ideals of a feudalistic society as those of the Persian epics. It is assumed that the perpetuation of a tradition of knightly virtues in Transoxiana resulted from the survival there of the feudalistic social and cultural structures that had disappeared in Iran under the centralized Sasanian state. Firdausī's epic, which has been linked with legends created and preserved by the minstrels (*gōsān*) of the Parthian age of feudalism in Iran, thus finds a graphic counterpart in Transoxiana where the ideals of a feudalistic society were perpetuated long after their disappearance in Iran.[1] To the Persians of the early Middle Ages, however, Transoxiana represented more than a ready reserve of legend where hoary knights were pitted against unpredictable, impetuous and unhuman *dīv*s. Tūrān was also the arena for a contest of wits in which Persians were matched against rational men whose moral codes and social patterns were similar to their own. Firdausī portrays the Turanian leader, Afrāsiyāb, as an equivocal figure whose treacherous schemes and flair for "Byzantine" intrigue were equalled by his profound wisdom, generosity and extraordinary valour. But legend would seem to have only embellished the intense conflicts between Iran and its eastern neighbours that resulted from the genuine threat which the latter presented to the political and economic security of the Iranian state. Despite its history of political fragmentation, punctuated by nomadic inroads, the resourceful merchants, missionaries and military personnel of Transoxiana contributed towards the creation of the resplendent period of cultural florescence and economic prosperity in Central Asia in early medieval times.

II
Khwārazm I

As the northernmost part of Transoxiana, pre-Islamic Khwārazm had experienced a relatively long and sophisticated civilization prior to the Muslim conquest. The early beginning of the Khwarazmian civilization in the Oxus delta was probably a result of its geographical accessibility and its agricultural potential. The distinctive Khwarazmian Neolithic Keltminar culture developed at the end of the 4th millennium B.C. on the banks of the now dry Akcha Daryā, east of Bīrūnī. The archaeological picture of Bronze Age Khwārazm demonstrates what may be termed a continuum of Saka culture, which was clearly interrupted

[1] M. Boyce, "Zariadres and Zarer", *BSOAS* XVII (1955), 47ff; Frye, *Heritage*, pp. 118ff, 235ff.

during two periods of urban development that preceded and followed the Sasanian dynasty in Iran. W. B. Henning convincingly correlated the spurt of the pre-Islamic Khwarazmian civilization with the degree of Khwarazmian independence from Sasanian rule; his argument suggests a reorganization of S. P. Tolstov's chronological classification of historic sites in pre-Islamic Khwārazm.

The *first phase* of Khwarazmian urban development corresponds with the downfall of the Achaemenians, at which time ancient Khwārazm (Huvārazmiš) gained independence from Persian rule. Under the supervision and maintenance of a ruling class, a network of irrigation canals was developed in the delta of the Āmū Daryā, which watered the fields about fortified settlements of the "Archaic" period, such as those excavated at Kyuzeli-gyr and Kalaly-gyr I (west of Tashauz on the Āmū Daryā delta). Kyuzeli-gyr was protected by projecting towers connected by a string of walls within the thickness of which were built contiguous triple corridors (width 2.5–4 m). These "habitable walls" formed an irregular ring around three tower-like structures and a hall constructed of mud brick of the standard size of 40 by 40 by 10 cm, identical to those used in other Khwarazmian buildings. The addition of "bent-axis" entrances to the fortification walls at Kalaly-gyr I suggests comparison with Parthian architectural principles.

During the subsequent "classical" or "K'ang-kyo" period the Khwarazmian language was committed to writing, as indicated by Middle Iranian words written in Aramaic letters on large clay jars (Persian *khum*) found in the necropolis of Koĭ-krylgan-kala.[1] When Tolstov termed the pinnacle of the pre-Islamic civilization of Khwārazm the "K'ang-kyo" period, he followed Barthold's identification of Khwārazm with the appellative *K'ang-chü* of the Chinese sources. The survival of the term *kang* in connection with townships in Transoxiana was regarded by Tolstov as proof of this assumption. Chang Ch'ien's references to K'ang-chü evidently applied to a confederation of tribes that in the 2nd century B.C. inhabited five agricultural regions in Transoxiana, north of Bactria. To the east of the K'ang-chü were the Huns or Hsiung-nu who presumably occupied the area east of the Syr Daryā. The K'ang-chü state probably comprised agricultural communities and townships and nomadic tribal groups who may have represented the governing body within the confederation. Despite the fact that later Chinese sources (*T'ang shu*, ch. 146b) equated K'ang-chü with the

[1] Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 25 n 2.

Sogdian city of Samarqand, which at that time figured as the most notable city of Central Asia, the heartland of Chang Ch'ien's K'ang-chü probably lay farther north.[1] In medieval times Khwārazm was associated by Bīrūnī with Siyāvush, the legendary founder of that country, who was credited with the rebuilding of a Kang-dizh and with the founding of various towns in Pahlavī and Muslim sources. Firdausī's description of Kang-dizh as a citadel on a precipitous mountain overlooking the plain, however, is at variance with the physical landmarks of Khwārazm in its more limited geographical sense. The recent attempt by B. A. Litvinskiĭ to link a number of archaeological finds, datable from the 2nd century B.C. to the 4th century A.D., with the K'ang-chü confederacy marks a step towards the identification of the K'ang-chü state as a historical reality in Transoxiana.[2]

Just east of Bīrūnī in the Kyzyl-kum desert lies the fortified citadel of Koĭ-krylgan-kala, which originally towered over a surrounding town (figs. 1–2). The fort was built as a cylindrical two-storied structure, 42 m in diameter, containing vaulted chambers and storage rooms surrounded by a gallery with archers' slits pierced through the citadel drum. Workmen's quarters and storage chambers constituted the rooms built radially between the citadel drum and the outer ring of defensive walls (diam. 87.5 m). The circular plan, the standard brick size, the projecting defensive towers, and the "bent-axis" entrance of this fort combine elements from the earlier Bronze Age and the "Archaic" structures from Khwārazm, while the inventory from the site parallels that of other Central Asian sites datable to the Parthian period in Iran. A strain of hellenistic stylistic conventions may be detected in the figural representations on Khwarazmian ceramic canteens from Koĭ-krylgan-kala, although their thematic content appears to have had a more limited regional application (cf. a griffin-topped helmet on a male head and an equestrian lancer with a Scythian-type headdress that establish formal antecedents for such representations in later Khwarazmian art). Fragmentary murals from the latest building level at this fort

[1] Watson, *Shih chi*, p. 123; Pulleyblank, "The Wu-sun and Sakas"; Litvinskiĭ, *Drevnie kochevniki*, pp. 171ff. I wish to thank Professor E. H. Schafer for his helpful comments on the Chinese sources in regard to this question.

[2] Bīrūnī, *Chronology*, pp. 40–2; Firdausī, J. A. Vuller's Persian text II, 617ff. No general agreement exists on the question of the location of the Kangdiz of the Pahlavī sources; cf. J. Darmesteter, *The Zand Avesta* (*SBE* XXIII 2, Oxford, 1883), 67; J. Markwart, *A Catalogue of the Principal Capitals of Ērānshahr* (Rome, 1931), pp. 23ff. On various suggestions for the location of K'ang-chü, see Shiratori, "A Study of Su-t'ê", pp. 81–145; Frye, "Tarxūn-Turxūn", pp. 123–6; Maenchen, "Huns and Hsiung-nu", p. 230; Litvinskiĭ, "Dzhunskiĭ mogilnik", pp. 29–37.

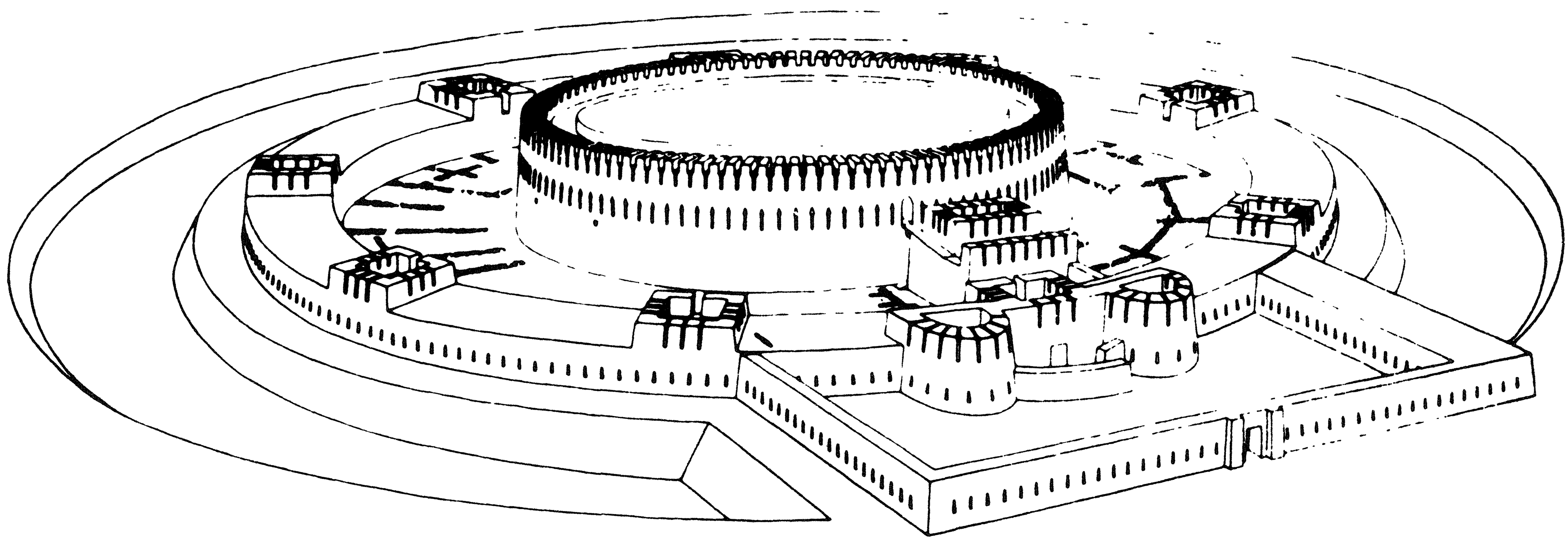


Fig. 1. Sketch of a reconstruction of the Khwarazmian fort of Koi-krylgan-kala, *c.* 1st century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.

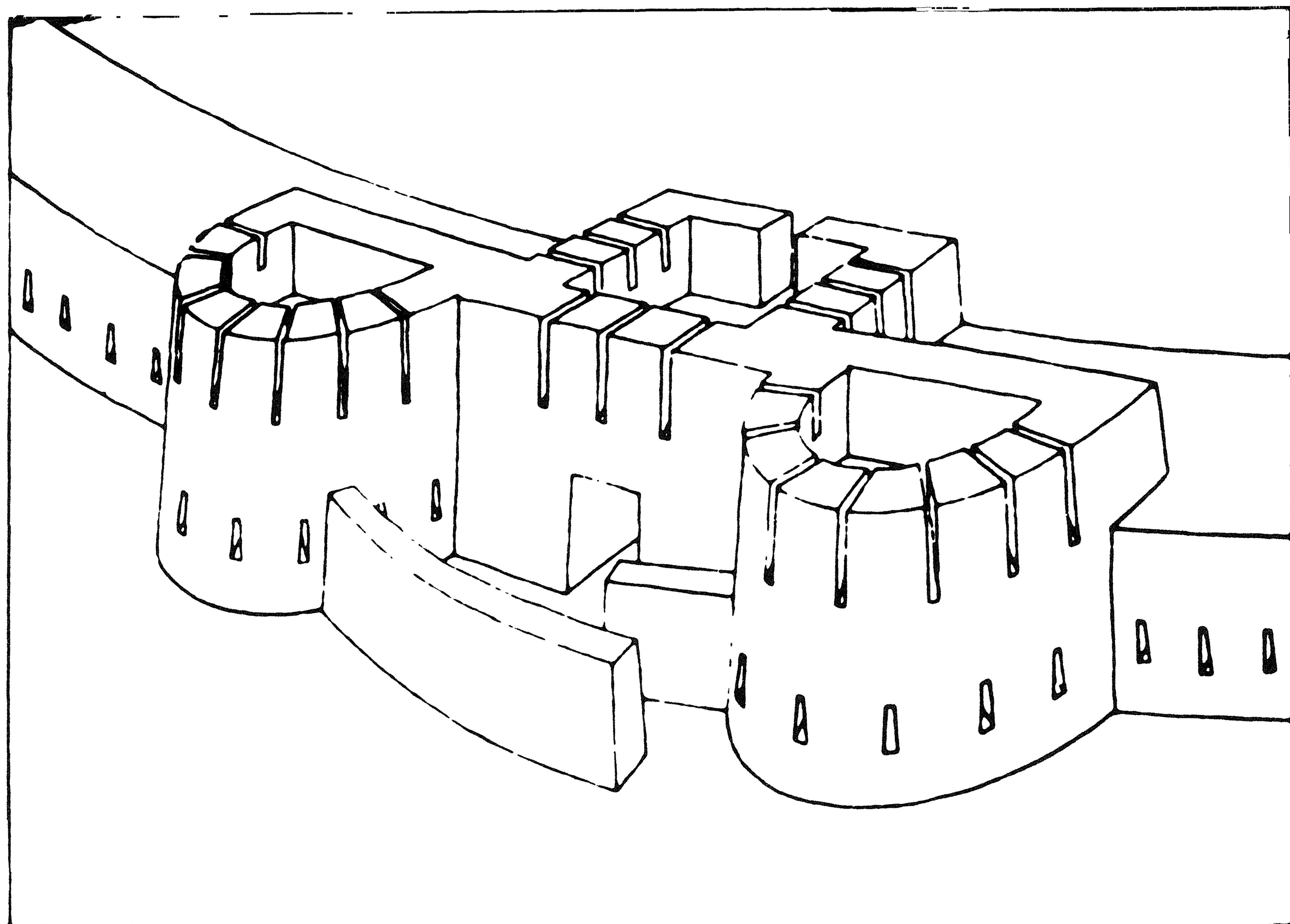


Fig. 2. Sketch of a reconstruction of the Khwarazmian fort of Koĭ-krylgan-kala, showing the second gateway with its "bent-axis" entrance.

display a linear style with colours applied in flat washes, generally without the use of shading; these characteristics associate this artistic school with the Graeco-Iranian style of the Parthian paintings from Kūh-i Khwāja (Sīstān) and Khwarazmian murals from the royal palace at Toprak-kala (see below).[1] The function of this monumental fort is still disputed. However, the presence of numerous ossuaries and ash urns within the complex and its neighbourhood, and the similarity

[1] E. Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East* (New York, 1941), pp. 301ff, pl. CI–CIV; Schlumberger, *Der hellenisierte Orient*, p. 189.

between the circular plan of the fort and the plan of smaller Khwarazmian Bronze Age and Saka burials (cf. Tagisken) and tower-shaped ossuaries, have led to the tentative identification of the structure at Koĭ-krylgan-kala as a funerary monument.[1]

To the latest level at Koĭ-krylgan-kala belong a number of terra cotta sculptures that served to preserve the likeness of the deceased on ossuaries. These portraits are evidently derived from the "face-urn" receptacles for cremated ashes which antedate the ossuaries in Khwārazm. The life-size seated male figure from the vicinity of Koĭ-krylgan-kala, originally attached to an ossuary (pl. 121), is remarkable for its monumentality and for the simplicity and directness of its expression. The roughly triangular face, short pointed beard, shoulder-length hair, torque, and the flat body planes of this figure recall Parthian sculpture of around the 1st and 2nd centuries. A second ossuary figure from the Koĭ-krylgan-kala area, however, has soft rounded contours, large oval face and prominent chin that associate it with the style of the sculptures from Toprak-kala (see below). The similarities between the sculptures and painting styles from Koĭ-krylgan-kala and those from Toprak-kala suggest that the two may have overlapped in time.

Excavations at Toprak-kala, north-east of Bīrūnī, have uncovered an early medieval Khwarazmian town site that included a rectangular walled enclosure (500 by 350 m) with a palace (80 by 80 m) constructed against its northern wall. The limits of an "Inner Palace" were defined by two massive towers (40 by 40 m) constructed on the northern wall; a third tower marked the southern limits of the "harem" within the royal residence. The façade of the palace, facing east, was evidently decorated with life-size alabaster sculptures, whereas monumental stucco sculptures and murals decorated the interior of the palace. Female figures represented in profile and three-quarters view constituted the subject matter of the murals from the "harem" (pl. 122). These were executed by means of variegated brush strokes that define contours and fill in details. The figures are placed against a shallow two-dimensional background, which in some examples is patterned with heart-shaped motifs like those found in paintings of the Parthian period from as far afield as a Sarmatian catacomb at Kerch on the Black Sea and the Buddhist remains from Mirān in eastern Turkestan.[2]

[1] Tolstov and Vaĭnberg, *Koĭ-krylgan-kala*, pp. 255ff; Rapoport and Lapirov-Skoblo, "Bashneobruznye Khorezmiĭskie ossuarii", pp. 147–56.

[2] I. M. Rostovtzeff, *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia* (London, 1922), pp. 160ff, pl. XXVIII–XXIX; Bussagli, "Paintings", pp. 22ff.

A narrow corridor with arched doorways connected a series of large halls that constituted the "Inner Palace" at Toprak-kala. The upper segment of the walls of the "Hall of Kings" (28 m^3) was pierced with niches that contained monumental royal portraits fashioned in painted terracotta and executed with a unique blend of realism, hellenistic illusionism and decorative formality. The large oval heads, the protruding lower lips and the round eyes and massive body proportions of these figures (pls. 123–4) distinguish them from the later ideal type in Sogdian art, where the size of the human head in proportion to the elongated body is considerably reduced (pls. 125, 147). While portrait heads, such as that of the dark-complexioned warrior from the "Hall of the Dark Guards" and some patterns of dress and ornament may represent strictly regional expressions, the style and iconography of the sculptures and murals from Toprak-kala associate the latter with the more general Graeco-Iranian style of the east Iranian world in Parthian times.

Tolstov, who believed Kushān rule to have extended to the shores of the Aral Sea during the 2nd to 4th centuries A.D., dated the Toprak-kala palace to the 3rd or 4th century A.D. on the following grounds: (1) dated documents from the palace at Toprak-kala, (2) numismatic evidence from the site, (3) the presence of the Dravidian physical type in Khwārazm in Kushān times and (4) Indian artistic influences in works of art from the site. The assumption of Kushān domination of Khwārazm has since been questioned, chiefly because of the lack of concrete archaeological evidence, the absence of Buddhism in Khwārazm and the reliance of the Khwarazmian era upon an event of local significance that probably occurred some time during the period 42 B.C. to A.D. 20.[1] Moreover, in a study of numismatic material from Toprak-kala, V. M. Masson satisfactorily linked the Khwarazmian coins from Toprak-kala (pl. 126) with Graeco-Bactrian coin types rather than with the later Kushān numismatic tradition.[2] The Dravidian physical type found among the skeletal remains in Khwārazm and recorded in the terracotta head from the "Hall of the Dark Guards", Tolstov admits, may indicate the continuation of an Indo-Dravidian substratum in the population of Khwārazm from Neolithic and Bronze Age times, an assumption for which there is some material support. Finally, Tolstov's comparison

[1] Henning, "The Choresmian Documents", pp. 166–79; Livshits, "Khwarezmian Calendar", pp. 433–46; Azarpay, "Nine Inscribed Choresmian bowls", p. 203n.

[2] V. M. Masson, "Khorezm i Kushany", pp. 79–84.

of the Toprak-kala paintings with the Indian paintings from Ajanta from the 3rd and 4th centuries (the "dark" period of Indian painting) remains inconclusive. While the assumption of Kushān political domination of Khwārazm does not appear to be warranted by the available evidence, contact between the Aral Sea region and Bactria doubtless inspired the Graeco-Iranian iconography and the expression of the dynastic cult housed in monuments for which there exist both Kushān and Parthian counterparts.[1] The destruction of the Toprak-kala palace, associated by Henning with an early Sasanian campaign, can be placed in the early part of the 3rd century, after which time the site may have been briefly occupied before its abandonment.[2]

Soon after the fall of Toprak-kala the network of irrigation canals around the Āmū Daryā delta fell into disrepair, the towns were abandoned or neglected and an economic crisis confronted the Khwarazmian state. Tolstov connects these events with the penetration of steppe elements represented by the "Chionite-Hephthalites" in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. This barbarian migration, which was doubtless facilitated by the loss of Khwarazmian autonomy after the Sasanian attacks, is demonstrated by the appearance of a strong Mongoloid strain among the Europoid population of Khwārazm particularly towards its frontiers (cf. Kanga-kala).

Khwārazm II

The *second phase* of pre-Islamic urban development in Khwārazm corresponds with the post- or late Sasanian epoch in Iran when Khwārazm enjoyed a brief period of autonomy under the rule of a local dynasty (the "Afrīghid" period). Excavations of the ancient cemetery of Kuyuk-kala and Tok-kala, both north of Nukus, revealed the continuation of the earlier Khwarazmian practice of burial of human bones in receptacles or ossuaries. On the alabaster ossuaries from Tok-kala were occasionally painted scenes of mourning executed in a linear and two-dimensional style, simplified versions of similar scenes of mourning depicted in a mural from Sogdiana and on a painted urn from Mary where parallel funerary rituals were evidently observed.[3] The continued

[1] Schlumberger, pp. 189ff.

[2] Henning, "The Choresmian Documents", pp. 170; Livshits, "Khwarezmian Calendar", pp. 433ff.

[3] Yakubovskii, p. 111, pl. XIX–XXIII; G. A. Koshelenko, "Unikalnaya vaza iz Merva", *VDI* 1966:1, pp. 92–105, fig. 4.

use of ossuary sculpture in Sogdiana in the 5th to 8th centuries A.D. is proof of even earlier cultural ties between the latter region and northern Transoxiana (pl. 127). The dates of the Tok-kala painted ossuaries, indicated in Khwarazmian inscriptions on the alabaster receptacles, show a range of A.D. 616–711, which corresponds with the brief renaissance of the Khwarazmian pre-Islamic civilization before the Arab destruction of the site in A.D. 712. Cultural continuity between the first and second phases of urban development in Khwārazm may be observed in the persistence of references to the local Khwarazmian era, in Khwarazmian coinage (pl. 128), and in the survival of earlier artistic and iconographic formulas up to the time of the Muslim conquest of Khwārazm.

III. SOGDIANA AND NORTHERN BACTRIA (TUKHĀRISTĀN)

In Parthian times Transoxiana south of the Khwarazmian delta adhered either to the Sogdian cultural complex (centred around the Zarafshān and Kashka Daryā rivers) or to the culture of northern Bactria (both banks of the Āmū Daryā along its middle course). Geographical proximity was naturally a factor in the predominance of one or the other of these two major sources of influence, as demonstrated by the affinity between the Farghāna and Chāch (Tashkent oasis) cultures and that of Sogdiana. Throughout the ancient and early medieval periods the settled communities of these areas practised an agricultural form of economy based on artificial irrigation, traces of which are preserved in these river valley regions.

Numismatic data from the 3rd century B.C. suggest that some Sogdian oases such as Marakanda (identified with the Afrāsiyāb section of modern Samarqand) were under the influence of Bactria (north of the Hindu Kush) and the Graceo-Bactrian kings. However, Sogdian cities were probably independent of the Kushān successors of the Graeco-Bactrians who, nevertheless, exerted a lasting influence upon the Sogdian civilization.[1] Sogdian minor arts of the 1st to the 4th centuries A.D. display lingering traces of hellenistic iconography in the local coinage and in terracotta figurines from the Samarqand area (pl. 129), while Sogdian contact with Kushān Tukhāristān (as Bactria came to be known under the Kushāns) is recorded by the presence in Sogdiana of grey and red pottery covered with similarly coloured slips.

[1] Nilsen, "Kyzyl-kyr", pp. 60–78; Grigorev, "Gorodishche Tali-Barzu", pp. 87ff. For north Bactrian architecture of this period, see B. A. Litvinskiĭ and Kh. Mukhitdinov in *Sovetskaya arkheologiya* 1969:2, pp. 160–78.

Such features as vertical handles, tall footed vessels, and bands of large curvilinear patterns painted freely on the vessel in a dark red slip, however, are distinctively Sogdian. The meagre Sogdian architectural remains of this period from Kyzyl-kyr (northwest of Bukhārā) and Tal-i Barzu (Samarqand area) compare closely with the architectural patterns of Khwārazm expressed in the mud-brick vaulted chambers with the continuous wall bench (*ṣuffa*); these elements distinguish the architectural tradition of northern Transoxiana from that of the south or Turkhāristān, where post and lintel structures and stone masonry of the hellenistic past survived until the end of the Kushān period.[1]

The Graeco-Bactrian city of Tirmidh, founded near the confluence of the Surkhān Daryā and the Āmū Daryā rivers, was evidently a flourishing Buddhist community and an important Kushān frontier town until the 4th century A.D. The presence of post-and-lintel-type buildings, stone-column bases, Corinthian-type capitals, stone cornices and masonry, hellenistic motifs, and finally, the discovery of Bactrian inscriptions at Tirmidh place the city firmly within the Kushān cultural sphere. Appropriately, the monumental Aĭrtam frieze from Tirmidh, now in the Hermitage Museum, illustrates the blend of Graeco-Bactrian and Indian stylistic conventions which found Kushān patronage in the contemporaneous art of Gandhara in the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. The question of the origin of Mediterranean influence in Central Asia, prior to the spread of Buddhism there, may be re-examined in the light of the discovery of the hellenistic city of Aï Khanum, tentatively identified by P. Bernard as Ptolemy's *Alexandria Oxiana* (v. 12.6) on the left bank of the Oxus. Founded by successors of Alexander, this hellenistic city survived in the heart of Central Asia until its destruction by a wave of nomads *c.* 100 B.C. The more purely hellenistic art of Aï Khanum thus represented the first stage in the development of the Graeco-Iranian style in the early Kushān period, as defined by Daniel Schlumberger.[2] The early Bactrian artistic school which grew in this medium evidently served a largely secular function among the nomadic ruling classes of Bactria, whose own cultural patterns were clearly fused with those of the Graeco-Bactrians in the architecture of the palace, and in the murals and sculptures from Khalchayan, in the Surkhān Daryā basin (pls 75, 130–3). Some of the painted clay

[1] V. M. Masson, "Dnezhnoe Khozyaĭstvo drevneĭ Azii"; E. V. Zeimal, in *Numizmatika i épigrafika* III (Moscow, 1962), p. 145.

[2] Bernard, "A ĭ Khanum"; D. Schlumberger, in *JA* 1964, pp. 303–26; *idem*, in *Syria* XXXVII (1960), pp. 131–66, 253–318; *idem*, "Excavations of Surkh Kotal", pp. 77–95.

sculptures recovered in the small palace at Khalchayan (somewhat less than life-size), were identified by their excavator, G. A. Pugachenkova, as royal portraits of the rulers of this north Bactrian district in the early Kushān period.[1] Traces of hellenistic iconography and interest in portraiture distinguish this remarkable group of sculptures from a later series found at nearby Dalverzin-tepe, south of Dennau in southern Uzbekistan (pl. 134). Executed in painted plaster on a clay core, the more durable Dalverzin-tepe sculptures manifest a tendency towards standardization of figures as ideal types in a manner that suggests the influence of Buddhist artistic canons in this school of sculpture in northern Bactria. These sculptures were discovered in the vicinity of a Buddhist sanctuary and represent the early phase of the Buddhist art of northern Bactria in the Kushān period.

The Buddhist culture of northern Bactria is more fully recorded at Kara-tepe, at Tirmidh, which marks the site of the only Buddhist cave complex in western Turkestan. This religious centre dated from the time of Kanishka and his successors and was housed in some twenty-five cave complexes hewn in sandstone cliffs northwest of Old Tirmidh. The recent excavations of B. Ya. Staviskiĭ at this site have yielded fragments of stucco and stone sculpture, murals and numerous inscriptions in Bactrian, Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhi scripts referring to the dedication of gifts by donors who presumably belonged to the Buddhist community of Tirmidh in Kushān times.[2]

The trade route that connected Tirmidh and medieval Chaghāniyān, in the Surkhān Daryā basin, with Sogdiana to the north and Tukhāristān to the south, was doubtless a source of prosperity for Tirmidh and other transit stations on the Oxus. The famed "Oxus Treasure" was presumably discovered on the same trade route at Takht-i Qubād, in Qubādiyān territory near the confluence of the Kafirnihān and the Oxus rivers, to the east of which lay medieval Khuttal (Vakhsh and Panj basins) and Badakhshān.[3]

The political fragmentation and collapse of the major Central Asian states in the 4th century was related to the aggressive military campaigns of the early Sasanians that exposed the Central Asian states to nomadic inroads. By the 5th century, when many of the small city-states in

[1] *Skulptura Khalchayana*, p. 130; for a later date suggested for this site, see Schlumberger, *Der hellenisierte Orient*, pp. 59ff. [2] Staviskiĭ, *Kara-Tepe*.

[3] A. M. Belenitskiĭ, *Trudy Tadzhikskaya arkheologicheskaya ékspeditsiya* 1 (1950), 109ff; Dalton, *The Treasure of the Oxus*; Barnett, "The Art of Bactria and the Treasure of the Oxus".

Transoxiana had formed alliances (such as the coalition of Sogdian cities in the Zarafshān basin headed by Samarqand), the nomadic Hephthalites or White Huns had succeeded the Kushāns in Tukhāristān. The Hephthalite rulers of Transoxiana evidently permitted a degree of independence to some economically powerful Central Asian principalities, such as Samarqand, Bukhārā and Farghāna, where local dynasties continued to rule throughout the Hephthalite period and even after the penetration of the western Turks into Transoxiana in the 6th century.

The site of Balalyk-tepe, north of Tirmidh, in the Surkhān Daryā basin, offers a rare opportunity for study of a residence associated with the Hephthalite ruling class in Transoxiana. The Sogdian "Bukhārā letters" found on coins from Balalyk-tepe indicate the date of 5th to 6th century A.D., suggested for the site by L. A. Albaum.[1] Balalyk-tepe was a country seat with a small fortress raised on a 30 by 30 m platform constituting a rectangular hall with surrounding corridors. After the 6th century the plan of this structure was altered to accommodate a rectangular chamber with a single entrance, ceiling illumination, wall bench, and a wooden cornice decorated with stucco moulding. The last detail recalls the Aĭrtam frieze from nearby Tirmidh, which may have served as a prototype for the later building. The central hall at Balalyk-tepe was decorated with a continuous frieze of wall-paintings which reached a height of 1.8 m from the *ṣuffa*. The subject matter, a banquet attended by groups of male and female members of a provincial aristocracy, was evidently secular (pl. 135). Placed against a flat and patterned background, the reclining and seated figures are arranged in a shallow pictorial space in which emphasis is given to contrasting areas of flat colour and two-dimensional forms. A silver vessel in the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad displays a similar banquet with the principal figures represented in costumes identical to those found in the Balalyk-tepe paintings (cf. the sleeveless cape worn by the women, and the matted hair and the dress of the men). The date of 6th to 7th centuries thus indicated for the Hermitage silver dish is confirmed by a Sogdian inscription on the same vessel.[2]

It is probably purely due to chance that the Balalyk-tepe paintings have survived as examples of secular painting comparable to the

[1] On the "Bukhārā letters", and the coinage on which they occur, see R. N. Frye, *ANSNNM* 113 (1949), 1–50; *idem*, *ANSMN* IV (1950), 105–14; *idem*, *HJAS* XIX (1956), 106–25; Henning, "Mitteliranisch", pp. 52–5.

[2] Staviskiĭ, "O datirovkie in proiskhozhdeniĭ érmitazhnoĭ serebryanoĭ chashi ..."; Livshits and Lukonin, p. 172, para. 20.

sophisticated Sogdian murals datable from the late 5th to the early 8th century. Therefore, regardless of their intrinsic value, the Surkhān Daryā paintings provide an important link between two major phases in the tradition of wall-painting in Central Asia. The assumption that the Bactrian artistic tradition continued into medieval times within the context of the Buddhist church has found material support in the excavations of the Buddhist monastery at Ajina-tepe in the Vahkhsh valley, near Kurgan-tyube in Tajikistan. A massive stupa on a cruciform stepped base with a double flight of stairs on all four sides was housed in the small Buddhist monastery (100 by 50 m) at Ajina-tepe. This complex, with its adjacent courtyard, corridors and cells, was built entirely of mud-brick and clay blocks and decorated with murals and painted terracotta sculptures (pls. 136–7). A colossal figure of a recumbent Buddha (12 m), executed in stucco from moulds, occupied the length of one corridor, while smaller Buddhist images had been placed against the walls and inside wall niches throughout the entire structure. This unusually rich collection of Buddhist art of Bactria from the 7th and 8th centuries is marked by stylistic and iconographic traits that distinguish it from other Buddhist artistic schools of the 7th and 8th centuries in Central Asia (cf. Fundukistan, Quva in Farghāna).

For Sogdiana the 6th to the 8th century represented an age of exceptional prosperity and cultural growth reflected in new building projects that included the founding of new towns and the restoration and enlargement of older structures. The city of Panjikent, forty miles east of Samarqand on the Zarafshān river, was one of the Sogdian cities that were considerably enlarged in the 7th and 8th centuries. The relative importance of Panjikent in the Sogdian confederacy had increased considerably by the 8th century when Dīvāshtīch, the king of Panjikent, plotted an unsuccessful rebellion against Arab rule in Transoxiana. Panjikent, mentioned in the Sogdian royal archives from Mount Mugh, contained a walled city (*shahristān*), a fortified citadel, a necropolis and suburbs surrounded by an outer wall.[1] The shahristān at Panjikent was dominated by two rather similar and adjacent temple complexes, each with a sanctuary, a central tetrastyle hall and portico (*aivān*) (fig. 3). The last and brilliant phase of pre-Muslim Sogdian art is represented by series of murals represented in continuous registers on the walls of these public structures and in the private residences at Panjikent.[2]

[1] Freĭman, *Sogdiĭskiĭ sbornik*; Henning, "Zum sogdischen Kalendar"; Livshits, *Sovetskaya étnogaafiya* 1960:5, pp. 76–91.
[2] See the works of Yakubovskiĭ, Belenitskiĭ and Bussagli.



Fig. 3. Sogdian mural from the south wall of the principal hall of temple II, at Panjikent.

While the foundation of Panjikent antedates the 5th century, stratigraphic evidence and the inventory of the buildings indicate a date of 6th to 8th century for the majority of the structures at this site. The Sogdian cursive script of the Mugh documents used as "captions" on some of the Panjikent murals confirms a 7th to 8th century date for such series as the "Rustam cycle" (pls 138–9, 145–8) from the walls of a hall in a private residence at Panjikent (building VI, room 41), now in the Hermitage Museum. A. M. Belenitskiĭ's interpretation of the subject matter of the "Rustam cycle" as a Sogdian version of the Rustam legend is warranted by the existence of a Sogdian fragmentary text on this epic hero[1] and Firdausī's association of this theme with the decoration of a palace at the legendary Tūrānian city of Siyāvush-gird:[2]

> A city famous for its rosaries,
> Its lofty palaces, and orchard-grounds.
> He limned within the hall full many a picture
> Of kings, of battle, and of banqueting,

[1] Henning, "Sogdian tales"; E. Yarshater, "Rustam dar zabān-i Sughdī", *Mihr* VIII (Tehran, 1952), 406–11.

[2] Vuller's Persian text II, 625; A. G. and E. Warner, *The Shāhnāma of Firdausi* II (London, 1906), 286.

And painted there Kāūs with mace and armlets,
Crowned on his throne, with elephantine Rustam,
With Zāl, Gūdarz, and all that company.
Elsewhere he limned Afrāsiyāb, his army,
Pīrān, and Garsīwaz the vengeful one.
That pleasant city was the talk of all
Good men both in Īrān and Tūrān.

Excavations at Varakhsha, in the Bukhārā oasis, have yielded remains of a large Sogdian city, ruled by a local dynasty from the 5th to the 8th century. The Varakhsha citadel was built against a fortified wall overlooking the shahristān and comprised several barracks, an extensive palace with vaulted rooms (including the "Red Hall" and the "East Hall") and an open court with a spacious triple arched aivān.[1] The elliptical arches of the aivān were supported on massive round brick columns (diam. 2 m) and a pair of corner piers decorated with stucco carvings.

The geographical proximity of Bukhārā to the trade routes between the Zarafshān and Kashka Daryā basins on the one hand, and the Surkhān Daryā and Āmū Daryā basins on the other, may have contributed to the presence of "Indian" features in the murals found in the royal palace at Varakhsha. The Indian physiognomy and bare torso of the principal hunter represented in the paintings from the "Red Hall", however, are combined with compositional schemes that have the heraldic and hieratic quality of Sasanian art. The rigidity of the compositions in the Varakhsha murals is softened by the sweeping and graceful contours of the leaping animals that express the Sogdian taste for elongated and sinuous forms found in artistic workshops of the 7th and 8th centuries (pls 140–1).

The discovery in 1966 of wall-paintings on the walls of a royal reception hall at the Sogdian capital at Samarqand has added to the study of Sogdian art the new dimension of a sophisticated "court" style associated with the capital city during the 7th and 8th centuries.[2] Distinguished by brilliant colours and vividly defined details of costume, ornament and physiognomy, the Samarqand murals preserve unexpected documentation in a series of explanatory passages written in Sogdian cursive directly upon the paintings. A flat lapis lazuli blue

[1] See the works of Shishkin and of Pugachenkova and Rempel.

[2] V. A. Shiskin, *Iskusstvo* 1 (Moscow, 1966), 62–6; Livshits, "Nadpisi na freskakh iz Afrasiaba", pp. 5–7; Frye, "The significance of Greek and Kushan archaeology in the history of Central Asia", *Journal of Asian History* 1 (Wiesbaden, 1967), 33–44.

colour provides the background for the variegated jewel-like figures that are skilfully interrelated here by means of gesture, direction of movement and overlapping planes. Interest in the narrative is balanced by a taste for rich and ornamental colours communicating the spirit of excitement and fanfare that accompanied the arrival of a colourful foreign mission at the Sogdian court at the height of its power and splendour (pls 142–4). A desire for the display of pomp and ceremony is also manifested in actual remains of Sogdian silk weaves, metalwork and ceramics such as the cups of the 6th to 8th century that are distinguished by their sharply curved and metallic contours, undulating rims and glistening glaze specked with golden particles and stamped designs.[1]

[1] Henning and D. G. Shepherd, "Zandanījī identified?"; A. M. Bentovich, *Trudy Tadzhikskaya arkheologicheskaya ékspeditsiya* IV (1964), 264–98; Marshak, *Sogdiškoe serebro.*

PART VIII

SCRIPT, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

With the fall of the Achaemenian empire, Old Persian lost its ascendancy over the other Iranian languages of the realm, and the Aramaic script, which had served the empire as a means of official correspondance, began to be used in various Iranian provinces for rendering local languages, first in an ideographic and then in a more or less phonetic manner, with a number of frozen ideographs retained in each instance. The development of regional scripts from the imperial Aramaic is dealt with in Chapters 30, 31, 32*c*, 33 and 36, the last discussing in particular the nature of Aramaic ideographic writing in Iran.

The Iranian languages which were thus committed to writing between the Seleucid hegemony and the advent of Islam (and even later in some cases) belong to the Middle Iranian stage of development; they exhibit simpler grammar than Old Iranian, with word-order frequently assuming the syntactical function of the older word inflection. Of these, Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian and Khwarazmian in Aramaic script, and Bactrian in the Greek alphabet, are noteworthy and each of them is the subject of a separate chapter in this section; the extant material in each language is reviewed. Although the bulk of the Khotanese writings was produced after the fall of the Sasanians, linguistically and in terms of content they continue a Middle Iranian tradition and therefore are also treated here. In view of their historical importance and variety, Middle Persian writings are discussed in several sections of Chapter 32.

Of the literary output of the Parthian and Sasanian periods, in the stricter sense of the word, little is preserved in its original form; recensions, redactions or translations of these, however, notably in Persian and Arabic, exist and give us an idea of the imaginative compositions of the period. Chapters 31 and 32*a* in particular explore the literary products of Parthian and Middle Persian, the chief languages of the period. Editor.

CHAPTER 31

PARTHIAN WRITINGS AND LITERATURE

No Parthian literature survives from the Parthian period in its original form. The only works of any length which exist in the Parthian language were composed under Sasanian rule. For the literature of older times we are dependent on Middle Persian redactions, or even on Persian and Georgian versions of these, to give at second or third remove some impression of the nature and scope of what has been lost.

One reason for the scale of the loss is presumably that Parthian literature, both religious and secular, was oral, composed and transmitted without the use of books. The Parthians had, however, their own distinctive system of writing, attested from the beginning of the 1st century B.C., a development evidently of the chancellery script of the Achaemenians. This script was in origin Aramaic, and had been used under the Achaemenians to write Imperial Aramaic, the administrative language of their empire. Under the less firmly unified rule of the Seleucids and Parthians a number of regional forms of this script developed, of which five have been identified, namely that of the Parthians themselves, that of the Persians in the south-west (which came to be called Pahlavī), that of Median Āzarbāījān in the north-west (attested by the solitary gravestone at Armazi) and those of the Khwārazmians and Sogdians in the north-east.[1] All these regional scripts show the same development, namely that they were used to write, not Imperial Aramaic, but instead the various local Iranian languages, with a number of fossilized Aramaic words serving as ideograms. This development took place slowly, with a gradual use of more and more Iranian words, so that Aramaic with Iranian elements imperceptibly changed into Iranian with Aramaic ones. This change perhaps originated in the Parthian chancellery, and was imitated regionally, each area developing independently not only a characteristic style of writing, but also a distinctive stock of Aramaic words used ideographically. There evolved also gradually, for greater clarity, a general use of Iranian inflections with these ideograms, to indicate

[1] These scripts are treated extensively, with full references down to 1958, by Henning "Mitteliranisch" pp. 21 ff, 30–40.

their syntactic function. This system developed fully only in Pahlavī, which had a longer history than any of the other scripts.

To learn to write the Middle Iranian languages by these ideogrammatic systems must have needed much application, and the skill was probably left in the main to the professional scribe, who used it, as far as is known, only for practical ends. The oldest surviving examples of his work are from the Parthian city of Nisā (now within Soviet territory, on the southern border of Turkmenistan).[1] Excavations here have produced almost three thousand ostraca, most of them concerned with the delivery of wine from local vineyards, the issue of food to the officials concerned, inventory lists, registers etc. The contents of these ostraca are thus restricted and monotonous. Nevertheless they yield a number of Parthian common nouns and proper names, some of the latter decidedly Zoroastrian in character, which accords with the fact that this Nisā material provides the oldest evidence which there is for the use of the Zoroastrian calendar. Some twenty of the ostraca bear month and day names from this calendar, and a valuable few have also the year, reckoned evidently according to the Arsacid era. The ostraca belong to a period from *c.* 100 to 29 B.C., and most, it seems, to between 77 and 66 B.C. The Iranian element in the vocabulary was still small at this stage.[2]

The use of the Parthian language and script is next attested at a place far removed from Nisā, namely the village of Avroman in the southwest of Iran.[3] Here were found in a sealed jar inside a cave three parchments, each relating to the sale of the same piece of property, namely half a vineyard. The two older documents are in Greek, and dated, by the Seleucid era, to 88/87 and 22/21 B.C.[4] The third, which is the worst-preserved, is in Parthian script and language (although still with a very high proportion of Aramaic ideograms),[5] and is dated by the Arsacid era to the middle of the 1st century A.D.[6] There are only

[1] See the bibliography for the various publications of Diakonov and Livshits. The whole material has not yet been published.

[2] This has led Vinnikov and Sznycer (see bibliography) to argue that the language of the ostraca is still Aramaic with Parthian words in it, rather than Parthian with Aramaic ideograms; but Diakonov and Livshits maintain that this interpretation cannot be upheld if the whole material is considered, and not merely selected pieces.

[3] On the exact location see Edmonds, "The Place-names of the Avroman Parchments".

[4] See Minns, "Parchments of the Parthian Period".

[5] See Nyberg, "The Pahlavi Documents"; Herzfeld, *Paikuli* I, 83; Henning, "Mitteliranisch", pp. 28–30.

[6] See Henning, p. 29. Henning dated the document precisely to between 7 Jan. and 5 Feb. A.D. 53; but this exact calculation was based on the assumption that the Arsacid calendar had a solar year of 365 days, which does not appear to have been the case; see M. Boyce, "On the Calendar of Zoroastrian Feasts", *BSOAS* XXXIII (1970), 515ff.

twenty years later than this change, and contemporary with the oldest Sasanian rock-reliefs in Fārs, that is with the oldest documents of the new art of Persia.

In the east something different took place. Between "Graeco-Iranian" art and "Graeco-Buddhist" art, which is but Graeco-Iranian art taking service with the new faith imported from India, there is no stylistic break any more than between pagan and Christian art in the Roman empire of the 4th century. That is "Graeco-Iranian" art lived on under its new Buddhist garment, just as Graeco-Roman art was to live on under its new Christian garment, while architecture and iconography only had to adapt themselves to new requirements. But with this development, art in the eastern Iranian countries nevertheless loses its properly Iranian character, and passes into the orbit of Indian culture. In spite of its having flourished in Iranian countries, in spite of all the links it has with Iranian culture, Graeco-Buddhist art is traditionally, and, as it seems to us, rightly, considered a branch of Indian art, remaining, therefore, outside the scope of the present volume.

To sum up we shall tentatively propose the following sketch.

In all Iranian countries after the conquest of Alexander, and for the eighty years or so of undisputed Graeco-Macedonian domination, art was predominantly Greek, with, however, some measure of Achaemenian survival.

With the disappearance of Greek power, this art of the early Hellenistic period slowly changed into "Graeco-Iranian" art, the monuments of Nisā giving us a glimpse of this process at its very beginning, in the late 3rd and early 2nd centuries B.C.

"Graeco-Iranian" art fully developed at the Iranian courts in Persia, Mesopotamia and Anatolia, on the one hand, the main extant instance being the great set of Commagenian monuments in the 1st century B.C., and at the Iranian courts between the Oxus and the Ganges on the other hand, where the main extant instances are the Scythian statues at Surkh Kotal and Mathurā at the time of Kanishka (early 2nd century A.D. ?).

In the west, during the 1st century A.D., "Graeco-Iranian art" itself gave birth to something new, "Parthian art", characterized in architecture (at least in Mesopotamia) by an extension of vaulting to large halls, in figurative arts by "Parthian frontality". It ends with the deep and sudden change, both political and cultural, brought about by the advent of the Sasanians.

In the east, "Graeco-Iranian" art survived without great change, until, sometime in the late 1st or early 2nd century A.D. it came to serve the new faith imported from India, thus transmuting itself into "Graeco-Buddhist" art.

Thus the hellenizing period in the art of the Iranian or Iranized countries, ends in Persia (and probably in Lower Mesopotamia) with the sudden change from Parthian to Sasanian art about A.D. 225; in the west, that is in Upper Mesopotamia and in the Syrian desert, Parthian art lingers on until we lose sight of it, owing to the destruction of Dura (256) and Palmyra (272); in the east, that is in the countries between the Oxus and the Indus, "Graeco-Iranian" art is absorbed into Indian art through its conversion to Buddhism.

a unity over a long period, which is not necessarily broken by such minor barriers of speech as exist within a single family of languages. This seems true of pre-Muslim Iran, where a broad stream of literature appears to flow from Median and "Avestan" times down through the Seleucid and Parthian periods and on into the Sasanian one, to be weakened then by new conventions attaching to a developing written literature, disappearing finally in the early centuries of Islam.

The secular literature of Parthia appears to have been almost wholly in verse, sung, and accompanied by a musical instrument. It was cultivated professionally by the *gōsān*, who gave his name to the Armenian *gusan* and the Georgian *mgosanni*. The word occurs also in Mandaean and survives in Persian, a tribute to the popularity and influence of the Parthian minstrel-poet.[1] Nothing is known directly of the training of the gōsāns, but from their skill and achievements one can deduce that it was rigorous. As for their role in society, "the cumulative evidence suggests that the gōsān played a considerable part in the life of the Parthians ... entertainer of king and commoner, privileged at court and popular with the people; present at the grave-side and at the feast; eulogist, satirist, story-teller, musician; recorder of past achievements, and commentator of his own times ... As poet-musicians ... the gōsāns presumably enjoyed reputation and esteem in proportion to their individual talents. Some were evidently the laureates of their age, performing alone before kings; others provided together choir or orchestra at court or great man's table; and yet others, it is plain, won a humble livelihood and local fame among peasants and in public places."[2]

Although much information can be gleaned about the gōsāns, especially from Armenian sources, pathetically little survives of their art. It is evident, however, that they played a major part in transmitting the tales of the Kayanians, the pagan ancestors of Zoroaster's patron Vištāspa, whose deeds are commemorated to the sixth generation (stretching back into a remote prehistoric time which had the characteristics of a true "heroic age"). Piety among Parthian princes and nobles, and perhaps claims by some of them to Kayanian descent, led evidently to these tales being sung still under their patronage by the gōsān (characterized as one "who proclaims the worthiness of kings

[1] See Boyce, "The Parthian *Gōsān*", pp. 10–19; and further on the word *gōsān*, A. Tafazzoli, *Rāhnemā-ye ketāb* XI. 7 (Tehran, Oct. 1968), pp. 410–11.

[2] Boyce, "The Parthian *Gōsān*", pp. 17–18.

and heroes of old").[1] Epic poetry was, moreover, still actively cultivated under the Parthians, with the deeds of living men being celebrated in the old heroic convention (which indeed lingered on, though weakening, through the Sasanian period, as the *Shāh-nāma* attests). The existence of a feudal society, whose leaders took an active part in battles, gave ample opportunity for heroic action; and the Parthian barons in their castles, the *dizbad*s, must have provided generous patronage for contemporary as well as for traditional themes. At some stage, when these Parthian stories had in their turn been handed down for generations – presumably, that is, in the later Sasanian period – the different traditions became confused, and minstrels celebrated the deeds of Parthian princes at the courts of Kayanian kings.[2] It has been suggested that this was deliberately done at the instigation of scions of the great Parthian houses, to enhance their prestige under the Sasanians;[3] but the manner in which it occurs suggests rather that the process was unconscious. Had the incorporation been deliberate, one would expect it to have been achieved with some circumstance and care. As it is, a group of Parthians, by no means evenly representing the "great houses",[4] appears with dream-like abruptness at the court of Kai Kāūs; they remain, actively participating or providing a background of council, throughout the reigns of the succeeding Kayanians, and although most meet their deaths in fit heroic manner, one of the most glorious of them, Gōdarz, is not even formally dispatched, but fades unmarked from the scene. This strongly suggests, not a deliberate or politic grafting, but one of the simplifications characteristic of the later stages of a long oral tradition.[5] In consequence of this process, when, probably in the 5th century A.D., the Sasanian priests drew on Parthian epic poetry for material for their great chronicle, the *Xwadāy-nāmag* or "Book of Kings", they unwittingly adopted Parthian traditions together with Kayanian ones, and so Gōdarz, Gēv and Bēžan, Mīlād and Farhād entered the Persian annals, unrecognized as Arsacids.[6]

[1] See *ibid.* p. 11; and cf. Boyce, "Zariadres and Zarēr", pp. 475–6.

[2] See Rawlinson, "Notes on a March"; Nöldeke, *Persische Studien*, II, 29–34, and *Das iranische Nationalepos*, pp. 7–9; Markwart, "Beiträge"; *Ērānšahr*, pp. 72, 74, and "Iberer und Hyrkaner", pp. 78–113.

[3] See Nöldeke, *Persische Studien*; Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, p. 128; Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*, p. 47, and "Die iranische Heldensage, p. 113.

[4] See Coyajee, "The House of Gotarzes", pp. 222–3.

[5] Boyce, "Kayanian Heroic Cycle", pp. 49–50.

[6] Representing older Parthian Gōtarz[es], Wēw, Wēžan, Mihrdāt[es] and Frahāt [Phraates]. The Kayanian tradition is also partially preserved, but without such contaminations, in the Avestan *yašts*, priest and minstrel poet uniting in this respect to keep alive the memory of Vištāspa's ancestors. **[Cf. pp. 390ff and 457ff.]**

Another cycle which came to be closely interwoven with the Kayanian one was that of the Saka Rustam, so that tales of this pagan hero were also preserved in the *Xwadāy-nāmag.* The blending of Kayanian and Saka stories may well again be due to intermarriage, this time of Zoroastrian Parthian with invading Saka, leading to the cultivation of both epics by minstrels of united houses.[1] An independent fragment of the Rustam cycle is preserved in Sogdian of the Sasanian period.[2]

Parthian heroic poems are thus mainly known through Persian and Arabic redactions of the lost Middle Persian *Xwadāy-nāmag*, and notably through Firdausī's *Shāh-nāma*, which in style probably owes something directly to the old Iranian epic tradition, doubtless not yet wholly lost in the Khurāsān of his day. Only one short, mutilated fragment of the Kayanian epic survives in independent form, namely the *Ayādgār ī Zarērān.* This is a celebration of a great battle in the holy wars of Zoroastrianism, composed in Middle Persian but probably not written down until as late as the 9th century A.D. The fragment is in one of the unrhymed, slightly irregular stress-metres which characterize all Iranian poetry before the Arab conquest;[3] and that there was once an older Parthian version is shown by Parthian words and phrases occurring in the Middle Persian text. (The two languages are close enough for such borrowings to remain as inconspicuous as are the dialect traces in the Homeric poems, or Anglian forms in the West Saxon of *Beowulf.*) The exploits of the Zoroastrian hero Zarēr were presumably first celebrated in the Avestan tongue, and passed thence into Parthian and in due course to the minstrels of Persia. (It seems likely that the Kayanian epic was known at least to some extent in Achaemenian Persia; but the evidence suggests that the heroic legends of this house were either not known in the south-west under the early Sasanians, or at least were not so well known there at that time as in Parthia.)[4]

Although the *Ayādgār ī Zarērān* must have been written down finally by a priest, it is wholly secular and heroic in spirit; and in style is

[1] On the similarities between the adventures of Rustam and the Kayanian Spendiyār see Spiegel, *Eranische Alterthumskunde*, I, 714ff, and "Awestā und Shāhnāme", p. 201; Nöldeke, *Das iranische Nationalepos*, pp. 47ff.

[2] See E. Yarshater, "Rustam dar Zabān-i Sughdī"; Sims-Williams, "Sogdian fragments", pp. 54–61. Tales of Rustam are told by the Armenian Moses of Khoren which are not to be found in the *Shāh-nāma*; see Nöldeke, *Das iranische Nationalepos*, p. 12. These too were presumably transmitted by the Parthian gōsān.

[3] The metrical character of the text was established by E. Benveniste, "Le Mémorial de Zarēr". On the stress-metres of pre-Islamic Iran see Henning, "The Disintegration of the Avestic Studies".

[4] See Boyce, "The Parthian *Gōsān*", p. 12, n2.

characterized by the fixed epithets, hyperboles and deliberate repetitions of oral epic. The poem has clearly lost some of its fire in being recorded, and the written text has suffered corruptions subsequently; but despite this, and the attrition of an immensely long oral transmission (probably over some 2,500 years),[1] there is still nobility of spirit and expression left, with worthy celebration of honour, courage, and a warrior's pride and skill.

In the *Ayādgār* the young prince Bastwar extemporizes a short and moving lament on the battlefield over his father's body. There are a number of other indications that in ancient Iran poetry was commonly improvised by persons of rank to express their emotions, of grief or joy, despair or love. For example, in the *Shāh-nāma* Isfandiyār on his Fourth Course, resting in the wilderness by a spring, takes his guitar and sings a lament for his hard lot, condemned ever to wander and to fight. His singing attracts the witch whom he must overcome, and it is likely, therefore, that the account of it is as old as the story. The incident is closely reproduced in the Fourth Course of Rustam. Joyous improvization is mentioned at the birth of Rustam himself, when all Sām's entourage "drank to the sound of the lyre, each joyfully uttered songs".[2] As well as this poetry for self-expression, minstrelsy for the delight or encouragement of others was widely cultivated by women. Singing girls are mentioned as commonly as dancers, and both accompanied the Parthian armies to war.[3] Women's minstrelsy is often mentioned for the Sasanian period in the *Shāh-nāma*.

Although the heroic element still persisted in Parthian literature, there was evidently also some softening of tastes, at least towards the end of the period; for the romance of *Vīs u Rāmīn*, which survives in Persian and Georgian versions, has been convincingly derived from a Parthian original, once more through the medium of a Middle Persian redaction.[4] The Parthian poem, thought to have been composed in the 1st century A.D., is concerned with Rāmīn (possibly a scion of the house of Gōdarz) and his unfading passion for his brother's wife Vīs, and hers for him. This romance, known in the west since 1864, has often been compared with that of Tristan and Isolde; but the undeni-

[1] The long war against the Xyōns is reduced to a single episode in the *Ayādgār*; see Nöldeke, *op. cit.*, 6. This abbreviation evidently took place during the centuries in which the story was transmitted orally after the compilation of the *Xwadāy-nāmag*.

[2] See Boyce, "The Parthian *Gōsān*", p. 28, with references.

[3] Plutarch, *Crassus*, §32; see G. Rawlinson, *The Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy* (London, 1873), p. 409.

[4] See Minorsky, "Vīs u Rāmīn"; Henning, "Tang-i Sarvak", p. 178, n2.

able likeness is presumably accidental, since "human fantasy . . . is not unlimited as regards situations in a three-cornered love".[1] Since *Vīs u Rāmīn* survives only in derivative versions, it is impossible to judge the style of the original. The story is told at length, with many episodes and embroideries. Repetitiveness of incident, and wearisome prolongation of dialogue (once to five hundred verses) may well have developed in the course of transmission, for it seems that even the Middle Persian version was not fixed in writing until after the coming of Islam. Emotions are intensely depicted, but character and motives only superficially drawn; and the poem differs fundamentally from the older epic in its subordination of action to feeling. Battle and hunt, though still described, have receded into the background, and the story pursues its way in the enclosed atmosphere of court and castle, garden and moonlit orchard, dealing in magic and subterfuge, faith and faithlessness, like any medieval French romance.

In *Vīs u Rāmīn* Zoroastrianism is a natural part of the fabric of life,[2] as is the Christian faith in the tales of western chivalry. As for the religious literature proper of Parthia, evidence is again regrettably scant. No part of the Avesta itself can be dated with certainty; but internal evidence suggests that the two latest of its extant books, the *Vidēvdād* (*Vendīdād*) and *Nīrangestān*, were compiled, partly from older material, during the Parthian period. In these works the Graeco-Roman system of measures is used, "presumably introduced into Persia by the Macedonian conquerors".[3] By this time Avestan is generally supposed to have become a dead church-language, and both works show a breakdown in its old inflectional system, although their usages are consistent enough to be perhaps compatible with an actual development of the language still at this time. In what part of the land their compilation took place is unknown. One Pahlavī text tells how Zoroastrian holy texts were transmitted orally in Sagistān (Sīstān) after Alexander's conquest.[4] Zoroastrian tradition ascribes to "the Arsacid Valaxš" (one of the three Vologeses) measures for preserving the Avesta and its *zand* (i.e. the commentary of the holy texts);[5] and it is

[1] Minorsky, "Vīs u Rāmīn (III)", p. 92.

[2] See H. Massé in the introduction to his French translation, pp. 12–13; and the remarks of von Stackelberg in Minorsky "Vīs u Rāmīn (II)", p. 33, together with Minorsky's own observations, *ibid.* p. 22 with n. 1.

[3] See Henning, "An Astronomical Chapter of the Bundahishn", *JRAS* 1942, pp. 235ff.

[4] Jamasp-Asana (ed.), *Pahlavi Texts* II, 25–6.

[5] *Dēnkard*, ed. D. M. Madan, p. 412, ll. 5–11; tr. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 8.

possible that this involved the first writing down of the Avesta, in Parthian script. What Valaxš seems more likely to have achieved was simply the bringing together of the best oral traditions, and the establishing of an oral canon at diverse centres of priestly learning.

As well as the canonical Avestan texts, there was evidently a zand in Avestan, and also presumably one in contemporary Parthian, some of which may survive in translation in the existing Middle Persian zand. Some of this is demonstrably pre-Sasanian, but whether such passages are of earlier Middle Persian or of Parthian origin cannot be determined.

The priestly schools of the Parthian period evidently concerned themselves not only with the Avesta and its exposition, but also with antiquarian learning in general, and with wisdom-literature. Part of the gnomic sixth book of the Pahlavī *Dēnkard* appears to have an Avestan origin in the lost *Bariš Nask*, and must therefore have been transmitted through the Parthian period. Only one solitary piece of wisdom-literature survives, however, which has demonstrably a Parthian predecessor, and that is the *Draxt asūrīg* "The Babylonian Tree", a Middle Persian verse-text with a few Parthian words remaining to show its ancestry.[1] The poem is about a contest over precedence between a date-palm and a goat; and though short it is difficult, with an unusual vocabulary and a riddling element. As well as being a contest work, this is also incidentally a catalogue poem, listing the qualities of tree and animal. It belongs, therefore, to wisdom-literature, being intended both to sharpen the wits and to give instruction.[2] The *Mādiyān ī Yoišt ī Fryān* is another riddling contest, this time between the pious Yoišt and the wicked Axt. It exists now only in Middle Persian, but the names of the contesters occur in the Avesta, and the work must have a long history.

Middle Persian specimens of mantic and prophetic literature, such as the *Ardā- Vīrāz-nāmag*, the *Zand ī Vahman Yašt* and the *Jāmāsp-nāmag*, all appear to derive from Avestan tradition; and the evident continuity of the Zoroastrian literature suggests that there must once have been Parthian versions of many of the texts which have come down to us in the Pahlavī books, in particular of those texts which belong to well-established categories of oral literature.[3]

[1] This was the first poem to be recognized in the Pahlavī MSS; see Benveniste, "*Draxt Asūrik*", and further literature in bibliography to chapter 32(*a*), p. 1389.

[2] Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature", p. 55.

[3] An attempt has been made to define these categories as they are exemplified in the Zoroastrian literature; see *ibid.* pp. 31–3, 40–1, 48ff.

There must, moreover, have been other Iranian traditions, in addition to the Persian one, flourishing within the broad Parthian realms, with local schools of priestly learning and of minstrelsy. The gravestone at Armazi, the old capital of Iberia, shows that Median Āzarbāījān had its own form of ideogrammatic writing,[1] and this indicates a thriving culture in the ancient land of the Magi. The fact that under the Sasanians the holy places of Zoroastrianism were located, unhistorically, in Āzarbāījān suggests the strength of priestly power in this region. Of Median minstrelsy, attested of old by classical authors, there appears to be only one solitary remnant, namely the story of Zariadres and Odatis, recorded first by Chares of Myteline, and attached eventually, it seems, in a degenerate form to the Kayanian cycle and the Zoroastrian Zarēr.[2] This association was probably made in the Sasanian period, when diverse materials were gathered together for the enrichment of the *Xwadāy-nāmag*. The predominant interest in the Zoroastrian north-east seems to have led, however, to the old Persian minstrel traditions themselves being ignored in Sasanian Pārs; and the only trace of them survives in the independent *Kārnāmag ī Ardašīr*, where the early adventures of Cyrus the Great appear to have been transferred to the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, presumably under the influence of popular story-telling, persisting locally throughout the Parthian period.[3]

The fact that one of the few surviving texts with demonstrably a Parthian predecessor is called the "Babylonian Tree" is a reminder of how far Parthian rule reached to the west. In the apocryphal *Acts of St Thomas* (who is called, in one tradition, the "Apostle of Parthia") is to be found the beautiful "Hymn of the Pearl" or "Hymn of the Soul". This Syriac poem not only contains Parthian loan-words, but uses symbolism drawn from the circumstances of the Parthian empire, which in it represents the Kingdom of Heaven. God appears as the "King of kings", dwelling in "Warkan" (Hyrcania), and surrounded by satraps, his treasury enriched by "chalcedonies of India and opals of the realm of Kushān" (v. 7).[4] At his summons come "the kings and chieftains of Parthia, and all the great ones of the East" (v. 38). The king sends his young son down to the wicked land of Egypt, there

[1] See Henning, "Mitteliranisch", pp. 38–40.
[2] See Boyce, "Zariadres and Zarēr", pp. 463–77.
[3] See A. von Gutschmid, review of Nöldeke's translation of the *Kārnāmag ī Ardašīr* *ZDMG* xxxiv (1880), 585–7 (= his *Kleine Schriften* iii (Leipzig, 1894), 133ff).
[4] Cited according to Bornkamm, "The Acts of Thomas", pp. 498–504.

to recover a lost pearl (i.e. the soul), and bring it back to Warkan. It has been argued that the origin of this poem should be sought in a pre-Christian Iranian gnosticism;[1] but what appears a stronger case has been made for its being a product of the Jewish-Christian community of Edessa,[2] which had Parthia for its mighty neighbour. The Parthian matter in the poem thus appears merely as the setting and outward trappings for the allegory. No precise date has been established for the work, but it must have been composed before the fall of the Arsacids.

The "Hymn of the Pearl" was evidently known to the prophet Mānī (A.D. 216–74?), who appears to have applied its symbolism in part to himself.[3] Mānī, a Parthian of noble birth, was born under the rule of the last of the Arsacids;[4] but he grew up in Babylon, in the extreme west of their domains, and his cultural background was accordingly largely Semitic. Those of his own writings which form the canon of Manichaean scriptures were all in Aramaic;[5] but he encouraged their translation into other languages, and himself chose among his missionaries Parthians who knew their own language *and* script, to carry his teachings to the north-east of Iran.[6] His religion was established in Parthia before the end of the 3rd century, and from there it later spread eastwards along the caravan routes across Central Asia, where Manichaean communities preserved many Parthian texts among their holy books, to be recovered in the present century by archaeologists.[7]

The Manichaean Parthian texts date accordingly from the latter part of the 3rd century A.D. down to perhaps the 10th century or a little beyond, and constitute by far the greatest amount of extant Parthian literature. These texts are all the more valuable because they are written in the clear and elegant "Manichaean" script, akin to

[1] By R. Reitzenstein, followed by G. Widengren and A. Adam (see bibliography). On Manichaean parallels with the "Hymn of the Pearl" see, further, A. Henrichs and L. Koenen, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* v (Bonn, 1970), 171–82.

[2] Most recently by G. Quispel, *Makarius*.

[3] See Bornkamm, "The Acts of Thomas", pp. 436–7.

[4] See H. Puech, *Le Manichéisme* (Paris, 1949), ch. 1; G. Widengren, *Mani and Manichaeism* (London, 1961), ch. 2.

[5] See G. Haloun and W. B. Henning, "The Doctrines of Mani", *Asia Major* III (1952), 204ff.

[6] See the Middle Persian text M 2, V i – R ii published by Andreas and Henning, "Mitteliranische Manichaica II", *SPAW* 1933, pp. 302–3.

[7] For details of the main expeditions see Boyce, *A Catalogue of the Iranian Manuscripts in Manichean Script* (where publication details are given of the individual fragments mentioned here). The chief collection of Parthian texts is to be found in Andreas and Henning, "Mitteliranische Manichaica III".

Syriac Estrangelo, which was generally used by Mānī and his followers. This form of writing gives a very fair idea of the sounds and syntax of Parthian in the 3rd century. Unfortunately very little of the Central Asian material is well preserved, and in the main it consists of single sheets and fragments of sheets. These yield passages of Parthian versions of a number of Mānī's own works, including his two long psalms.[1] The awkwardness of the prose texts (with anacoluthons and other clumsy constructions) is found also in the Middle Persian versions, which suggests that Middle Iranian prose had not evolved far enough by the 3rd century A.D. to be an adequate tool for theological exposition. (A recently discovered codex containing elegant Greek versions of some of Mānī's own words suggests that the stylistic difficulties do not lie in the Aramaic originals.)[2] Part of a long Parthian letter survives from the late 3rd century,[3] whose fairly brief sentences and occasional difficulties of syntax bear out the impression given by the style of the translations.

The best period for Parthian prose appears to be approximately the 4th to 6th century. The use of Indian loan-words (due, it seems, to contact with Buddhists) helps to date these texts. Among them is an account of Mānī's death,[4] which provides an interesting contrast with an earlier Middle Persian one representing probably an eye-witness's report. In the Parthian text, where the aim is not merely narrative, but also the evoking of emotion, the stylistic difference is striking. The syntax is varied, the vocabulary richer, and imagery effectively used.[5] Some of the same imagery appears in a hymn on this theme, composed in A.D. 384. It is impossible to prove the dependence of one text upon the other; but in general it is likely that prose borrowed for its literary development from verse. The discipline of translation must have been another potent factor in developing Manichaean prose.[6]

Most of the Manichaean Parthian literature consists in fact of hymns, some of which have poetic quality. Formally there are three categories of verse-texts: the long verse-cycle, made up of a number of separate sections; the long but undivided chant of praise; and the short hymn, commonly but by no means always abecedarian.[7] In the third category

[1] See Henning in Tsui Chi, "Mo Ni Chiao Hsia Pu Tsan", *BSOAS* xi (1943), pp. 216–7.
[2] See Henrichs and Koenen, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* v, 105.
[3] Boyce, *Catalogue*, M 5815 II ("Mitteliranische Manichaica III", b. 11).
[4] *Ibid.* M 5569 ("Mitteliranische Manichaica III", c).
[5] Boyce, "The Manichaean Literature in Middle Iranian", p. 72.
[6] *Ibid.*; for the use of the Christian gospels in Parthian and Middle Persian texts see Sundermann, "Christliche Evangelientexte in der Überlieferung der iranisch-manichäischen Literatur".
[7] *Ibid.* p. 74.

each verse or line (or, rarely, each significant word) begins with a successive letter of the alphabet. This convention belongs wholly to a written (in this case Aramaic) tradition. There is also a certain amount of Christian and gnostic imagery in the texts in general which is alien to Iran (e.g. the sea and fish and fishermen, the pearl, the crucified soul, the sleep of unconsciousness).[1] In the main, however, the poetic tradition is Iranian (the principles of Old and Middle Iranian versification were in fact deduced from these texts);[2] and part of the imagery appears traditional also, although the themes are new.

The latest Parthian texts show a falling off in literary merit, since these were evidently composed by Sogdian speakers in Central Asia, for whom Parthian was a dead church-language. The style of these texts (mostly short hymns and prayers) is accordingly imitative and conventional, and the vocabulary limited.

As well as the Parthian Manichaean material, there survive from the Sasanian period a small number of rock-inscriptions in Parthian language and script. The most important is the Parthian version of Shāpūr I's great trilingual inscription on the Kaʿba-yi Zardušt, at Naqš-i Rustam.[3] This long text is beautifully preserved, having been below ground level for many centuries until its excavation in 1939. It is written in good idiomatic Parthian, and a Parthian scribe has set his name to it. Through comparison with the Middle Persian version, upon which it depends,[4] it provides, therefore, excellent material to illustrate the differences between these two closely related languages and their systems of writing. The content of the inscription is of the greatest historical interest; and it is set out through sober statement and enumeration, without literary flourishes, a practical piece of work that fittingly crowns the long tradition of the Parthian scribes.

There is one other long royal inscription in Parthian, namely the Parthian version of the bilingual inscription on the monument at Paikuli.[5] This was set up to celebrate the proclamation of Narseh, in

[1] For examples see Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism*, *passim*.

[2] See Henning, "The disintegration". Some of the Turfan texts are written in a convention that shows how words were divided into syllables for singing: see bibliography, the articles of A. Machabey and H. C. Puech.

[3] See M. Sprengling, *Third-century Iran* (Chicago, 1953), pp. 1–21; W. B. Henning, "Notes on the Inscription of Sāpūr I", in *Prof. Jackson Memorial Volume* (Bombay, 1954), pp. 40–54, and "The Great Inscription of Sāpūr I", *BSOS* IX (1939), 823–49, and "A Farewell to the Khagan", pp. 510–15. For the works by E. Honigmann, A. Maricq and M. Rostovtzeff, see the bibliography for ch. 32 (*c*).

[4] Against Sprengling's view that the Parthian version was the original one, see Henning, "A Farewell to the Khagan", pp. 513–15.

[5] See Herzfeld, *Paikuli*; Henning, "A Farewell to the Khagan"; and Frye, "Remarks on Paikuli".

A.D. 293. The inscription is unfortunately badly preserved. Many of the great blocks of stone which formed the monument have been tumbled out of place, and some of those still in position are damaged. The text on a number of the fallen ones remains unpublished. The content of this inscription is again factual, the style objective and unadorned; but here in at least one small point the Parthian text seems to have been influenced by Middle Persian usage, which suggests the steady growth of dominance by the Sasanian scribes.[1]

As well as his great inscription on the Ka'ba-yi Zardušt, Shāpūr I left two other occasional ones of fair length, carved both in Middle Persian and Parthian. These are at Ḥājjīābād[2] and Tang-i Borāq,[3] both in the province of Fārs. These inscriptions, which are almost identical, both celebrate a champion arrow-shot made by the king.

Some private Parthian inscriptions of the Sasanian epoch have been found near Bīrjand in southern Khurāsān, which lies within the territory of Parthia proper. Some ten have been noticed, all short. The character of the script suggests that they are not all of the same period, but the only ones so far published, although undated, can be assigned to the early Sasanian period on the basis of the style of the figure-carving which one of them accompanies.[4] In general the evidence suggests that the Parthian language and script continued in fairly general use in Iran until about the end of the 3rd century A.D., after which the script is no longer known, and the use of the language appears restricted to the local or the particular.

[1] See Boyce in G. Redard (ed.), *Indo-Iranica: Mélanges présentés à G. Morgenstierne* (Wiesbaden, 1964), p. 31.

[2] See Herzfeld, *Paikuli* I, 87–9; H. S. Nyberg, "Hādjīābād-inskriften" in K. Barr and H. Eliekinde (eds.), *Ost og West: Afhandlinger tilegnede A. Christensen* (Copenhagen, 1945), pp. 62–74; Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 43n2.

[3] G. Gropp in Hinz, *Altiranische Funde und Forschungen*, pp. 229–37; D. N. MacKenzie in Bivar, review of Hinz, *Altiranische Funde und Forschungen*, *BSOAS* XXXIII (1970), p. 404.

[4] See Riḍā'ī and Kiyā, "Guzāriš"; Henning, "A new Parthian Inscription".

CHAPTER 32 (a)

ZOROASTRIAN PAHLAVĪ WRITINGS

The late Jean de Menasce had been asked by the Editor of Volume 4 to contribute a chapter on Zoroastrian literature after the Muslim conquest. When he was asked by me to contribute a chapter on Pahlavi literature of the Sasanian period for the present volume he was faced with a familiar dilemma. On the one hand, almost all the Zoroastrian Middle Persian writings that we possess are, in their final form at least, products of the 9th and 10th centuries, when the scholar-priests of the declining Zoroastrian communities of Iran made a notable effort through a literary exercise to defend the faith and instruct the faithful. On the other, the bulk of this literature is based on Sasanian material. As a solution to the problem, Jean de Menasce virtually cut into two the article that he had prepared for Volume 4, and assigned to the present volume the part which describes those works which more properly belong to the Sasanian era, even though assembled, edited, revised or augmented during the early centuries of Islam. His untimely death prevented his being approached to adapt the material more fully to this volume, and in the circumstances I did not think it proper to ask anyone else to alter what he had written so authoritatively. He was the leading authority on the scholastic side of Pahlavi literature, but did not concern himself much with the evolution of Pahlavi imaginative literature or with the more mundane aspects of Pahlavi writings. A compact but comprehensive account of Middle Persian literature in all its aspects is happily available in Mary Boyce's admirable article "Middle Persian Literature" (see bibliography), which the reader may consult with advantage. A few remarks are offered here as an introduction.

Of the imaginative literature of Persia in Sasanian times almost nothing survives in Middle Persian, and this has tended to obscure its width, variety and richness. Some survives, however, through Arabic and Persian translations, and a good deal more in Persian recensions and adaptations. The originals were destroyed partly during the Arab conquest and some subsequent foreign invasions, notably the Mongol onslaught, and partly through religious fanaticism in Iran itself, down to recent times.[1] But the most important factor for the disappearance of Middle Persian works was the neglect and disuse that they suffered as a result of the change of the script and the adoption of Islam. After a lull, a new literature – that of New Persian – emerged, which embodied and continued many of the norms and traditions of Sasanian literature and met the literary needs of the people. It is to this literature above all that we must turn for an appreciation of Sasanian literary genres and conventions.

Apart from religious literature, the most important genres were poetry, fiction, wisdom literature, history, and informative writing.

[1] See M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians* (London, 1979), pp. 209–11.

Poetry is perhaps the most elusive of these genres, not because it was neglected or weak, but because Sasanian poetry was largely united with music in the art of the minstrels, who had a tradition of oral transmission and usually did not commit their songs to writing.

With the fall of the empire, court minstrelsy, which was highly cultivated by Sasanian monarchs and the nobility, suffered a grievous blow; but the tradition continued, and when local dynasties emerged on Persian soil, court patronage was renewed and the Sasanian tradition was revived in a new garb. Rūdakī, "the blind bard" of the Samanid court, with his lyre accompanying his poems, may indeed be viewed as an incarnation of Nakīsā and Bārbad, the famous musician-poets of the court of Khusrau II. Meanwhile naturally there had been developments, and adjustments had to be made to adapt the Sasanian tradition to a new, non-Zoroastrian environment and to new fashions. The metre, which had been based on stress, was now governed by quantity, and forms and rhyme-schemes of Arabic models were adopted. The language, too, was based now on daily speech and, shorn of the stylistic flourishes and florid turns of phrase of late Sasanian times, had assumed a new quality, enriched by a number of Arabic loan words. But the essence remained. Much of the minstrel poetry was refashioned and many new songs and poems were written. In lyrics and in poems of praise and celebration the spirit as well as much of the imagery of Sasanian poetry lived on; and in the countryside, far less susceptible to Arabic influence, the Sasanian tradition continued practically unchanged.

Heroic poetry had enjoyed considerable popularity since Parthian times, when the *gōsān*s, professional minstrels, sang the adventures of kings and heroes in love and war. Although transmission continued to be chiefly oral, towards the end of the Sasanian period the epic cycles were recorded, systematized and incorporated in a semi-official "national history", the *Khwadāy-nāmag* ("Book of Lords"), which became the ultimate source of Firdausī's monumental work. Even though versified in the 10th century, Firdausī's *Shāhnāma* must be viewed largely as a work of Sasanian literature and a testimony to its richness and scope.[1] We have an original specimen of Sasanian epic poetry in the *Ayādgār ī Zarērān*, which relates an episode in the wars between Gushtāsp and Arjāsp the Turanian.[2]

[1] See Ch. 10(*b*), pp. 366ff, 393ff, 403ff on the *Khwadāy-nāmag* and its literary aspects.
[2] Cf. pp. 1157ff above.

Narrative poems of entertainment, like prose works of fiction, existed and some of them passed into New Persian. For instance, the romance *Vīs u Rāmīn* was versified in the 11th century by the Persian poet Fakhr al-Dīn Gurgānī after a Middle Persian version of a Parthian original.[1]

Works of fiction comprised historical novels, stories, fables, and folk and fairy tales. Of the historical novels the story of Bahrām Chōbīn and the Book of Mazdak, both mentioned by Islamic writers, are reflected in Persian writings.[2]

Sasanian tales of love and adventure find examples in many popular romances such as the *Sindbād-nāma*, *Dārāb-nāma*, *Fīrūzshāh-nāma*, and others, which formed the stock-in-trade of professional storytellers and were most probably committed to writing only in the Islamic period. The collection of fables known as *Kalīlag ud Dimnag*, a Pahlavi adaptation of the Indian *Pañčatantra*, had a great vogue and was translated from Middle Persian into Syriac and Arabic. *Hazār Afsāna* ("A Thousand Tales") is said to have been a collection of stories from which *Alf lail wa laila* ("A Thousand and One Nights") was derived.

Wisdom (*andarz*) literature, common to most Middle Eastern cultures, was greatly cultivated by the priests and the scribal class (*dabīr*s) and included religious, ethical, and practical precepts, maxims and epigrams, as well as gnomic observations.[3]

History was considered by the Sasanians an important branch of knowledge, but not so much an impartial record of events as a means of validating social and political ideals and institutions, and for personal edification. Too clear a distinction was not accordingly made between fact, legend, and myth, and a good deal of wisdom literature and entertainment material was incorporated. Islamic writers drew extensively on translations of Middle Persian historical works, notably the *Khwadāy-nāmag*. Through their renderings, quotations and adaptations, we can form a fairly clear idea of the content and style of Sasanian

[1] On Sasanian poetry apart from the works cited in Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature", see A. Tafazzoli, "Andarz ī Wehzād Farrox Pērōz containing a Pahlavi poem in praise of wisdom", *StIr* I (1972), pp. 207–17; E. Yarshater, 'Affinities between Persian poetry and music", in P. Chelkowski (ed.), *Studies in art and literature of the Near East in honor of Richard Ettinghausen* (New York, 1974), 59–78; and L. P. Elwell-Sutton, *The Persian Metres* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 168ff. On *Vīs u Rāmīn* see p. 1158.

[2] See Bal'amī, *Tarjuma-yi Tārīkh-i Ṭabarī*, ed. M. T. Bahar (Tehran, 1341/1962), pp. 1070–89; Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar al-Mulūk*, ed. H. Darke, 2nd ed. (Tehran, 1968), pp. 257–78; *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, ed. M. R. Unvala, vol. II (Bombay, 1922), pp. 214–30; and Ch. 27 (*b*), pp. 994ff.

[3] On this genre see pp. 1180ff and Ch. 10(*b*), pp. 398ff.

historiography. (See Chapter 10(*b*), on "National history", for further discussion.)

Informative writings had a wide range, comprising geographical works, land surveys and travel guides, astronomical tracts, descriptions of plants, animals and wonders of the world, treatises on etiquette, court procedures and ceremonies, and law books.

Much of this wealth of secular literature was absorbed into the literature of Muslim Persia, composed in New Persian or Arabic; and the relatively few works which survive in Pahlavi (ably dealt with, below, by J. de Menasce) represent only those religious and scholastic compositions which could be preserved by an ever-dwindling band of priestly copyists during centuries of poverty and persecution.

(*Editor*)

The state of Zoroastrian writings in Middle Persian (Pahlavī) is paradoxical in that they represent the literature of a religious minority in its country of origin, where it had once been supreme. Middle Persian evolved rapidly under the influence of Islam and changed social circumstances into New Persian; yet in the Zoroastrian writings of the 9th–10th century we encounter a conservative language, essentially that of Sasanian Persia, in Pahlavī script – a script more cryptic than the Arabic, and in historical or "fossilized" spellings that allow little of the profound changes which the language had gone through to transpire. Our texts are largely expressive of religious ideas and institutions tenaciously held in the course of some two centuries of declining fortunes. The terminology peculiar to them, however, was soon to disappear from the Persian of Islamic Iran.

A small community of Zoroastrians from Khurāsān emigrated in the early 10th century and settled in Gujerat, founding the Pārsī community in India.[1] They were later joined by other Zoroastrians from Iran. Both Iranian and Indian communities, but chiefly the Iranians, have left us a number of works in Pahlavī, which wholly or partially reproduce, paraphrase or loosely reflect Sasanian writings. An account of these will be given here, with consideration of some Arabic and Persian works that were almost certainly translated from Sasanian Pahlavī. Others, which are considered to be the products of Islamic times, are discussed in Volume IV, chapter 17.

[1] S. H. Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History* (Bombay, 1920), pp. 70ff; M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians* (London, 1979), pp. 66ff.

THE "DĒNKART"

Pahlavi literature was almost entirely inspired by the body of scriptural texts in Avestan language known to us as the Avesta. But of the original Avesta only about one-quarter has survived, as we gather on the one hand from the lengthy summary of the Avestan Nasks (books) given in Book VIII of the Pahlavī *Dēnkart*, and on the other, from the large number of Pahlavī texts which, to judge by their style, are literal translations from the Avestan of which the original has not survived. These translations, for the most part glossed, are called the Zand, and our estimate of their verbal accuracy or failure to do justice to a dead language, depends on the varying reliability of the extant Pahlavī translations of Avestan books still in our possession. The latter are liturgical texts that were in constant use: the *Yasna*, the *Vīdēvdāt*, the "Small Avesta". Whenever an ancient source has to be identified, Book VIII of the *Dēnkart* is the one to which we must turn first; so we may begin by considering the *Dēnkart*.

The *Dēnkart* consists of nine numbered books, of which the first two have disappeared; it is an encyclopaedia of Mazdean knowledge which, in its present form, dates back to the 9th or 10th century.[1] While Book III is an original contribution to Mazdean theology and its defence against Islam, Book IV considers the theological problems of the Sasanian period, and Book V reverts to controversies dating from the caliphate of al-Ma'mūn. Book VI is an immense compilation of moral precepts deriving from the earliest stages of Mazdean thought. The legend of Zoroaster, from glossed and translated Avestan texts, makes up Book VII, and Book VIII is a detailed table of contents of the Nasks of the Avesta, with their divisions and sub-divisions. Book IX, the last, reverts in greater detail to the contents of the three Nasks which appear as commentaries linked with the Gāthās. Thus it is apparent that the whole work, with the exception of Books III and V, represents the religious knowledge available to an educated Mazdean during the Sasanian era.

Although Book VIII of the *Dēnkart* provides us with what are often copious summaries of the Nasks, the only complete translations we possess in Pahlavī are the following: the ritual of the principal sacrifice, the *Yasna*; the *Vīdēvdāt*, a collection of laws, often recited in its entirety in the course of purification; prayers to the gods (*nyāyišn*); prayers for

[1] See de Menasce, *Une encyclopédie mazdéenne*, pp. 10–12.

seasonal feats (*āfrīngān*); the *Ērpatistān*, or laws relating to the function of the *ērpat*; and the *Nīrangistān*, or laws relating to the *drōn* and other matters. The two last formed part of the *Hūsparam* Nask and are preserved with an important part of the Avestan text. Finally the "Zand of the Vohuman Yašt," to which we shall refer later in connection with eschatology, is unquestionably based on an Avestan writing, although revised in the Pahlavī translation.

All that must be noted here is the nature of these translations and their glosses. Translations of texts of such ambiguity as the Gāthās are as slavish as possible, so much so that, even allowing for inevitable misinterpretations, they do not fulfil the function of a normal translation which is to clarify an incomprehensible text. On closer consideration it would seem that the Pahlavī translation presupposes another, more explicit translation, to which the extant, very literal version merely serves as an auxiliary, almost meaningless to us unless compared with the original Avestan. An analogy might be found in certain literal translations of poetry, intended not to render the thoughts expressed by the verses, but merely to help the reader unfamiliar with the original language. This type of translation is pursued in Pahlavī methodically, a word never being translated by more than one or at most two equivalents. In poetic passages the Avestan word order, although far removed from the usual Pahlavī, is slavishly followed. With clear and simple Avestan prose, by contrast, the translator reasserts his freedom.

Methods of glossing likewise differ; glosses are of a "traditional" kind, as for instance the paraphrases of Pahlavī names of the Ameša Spentas, which add nothing to original names, but relate to etymological meaning; others confine themselves to a repetition of the translation in clearer terms; still others, and this is the case with the *Vīdēvdāt* and the *Nīrangistān*, are veritable commentaries interpolated in the translated text, often quoting the opinions and disagreements of the doctors of the Sasanian period. The names of these doctors appear in most of the Pahlavī works dealing with Avestan laws or ritual, as follows: Āparag, Ātur Ohrmazdān, Āturfarnbag Narseh, Āturbōžēt, Āturpāt i Ātrumihr, Āturpāt i Dātfarux, Āturpāt i Mahraspandān, Āturpāt i Zartuštān, Āzātmart, Baxtāfrīt, Brōšān-Ohrmazd (?), Dāt i Ātur-Ohrmazd, Dāt-Ohrmazd, Dāt-Farux, Dāt-Gušasp, Dātēn, Dāt i Vēh (?), Farux, Gōgušasp, Kay-Ātur-bōžēt, Māh-Gušasp, Māh-Ohrmazd, Māh-vindāt, Martbūt i Dāt-Ohrmazd, Martbūt i Māh-Ātur i Gōgušasp,

Mētyō māh, Narseh-Burzmihr, Nēryōsang Rōšan, Sōšyans, Vind-Orhmazd, Vēh-dōst, Vēh-Gušnasp, Vēh-Šāpūhr, Vōhū-dāt.

A commentary upon several *fargard*s (chapters) of the *Vīdēvdāt* exists in manuscript in India and part of it in London, but unaccompanied by the text.[1] It may be recalled that commentaries existed in Avestan language and formed part of the Avestan canon. An example has survived in chapters 19–21 of the Yasna, where each word in the great ritual prayers is given a learned interpretation. But we know from Book VIII of the *Dēnkart* that the whole *Bag* Nask was a running commentary to the Gāthās. A most detailed summary of this Nask takes up one-third of Book IX, leading us to believe that all the hidden potentialities of the text had been pondered at leisure.

The chronology of the commentators of the Sasanian period, however, is mostly unknown; all we know are the names of some who lived in the reign of Khusrau I.

We shall find the same exegetic process in the case of those Avestan texts which, though the original is lost, are available to us in translation and paraphrase. Here again the *Dēnkart* is of inestimable value.

THE LEGEND OF ZOROASTER

Book VII of the *Dēnkart* contains the most complete legend of Zoroaster preserved in Pahlavī. After an account of each episode, written in somewhat archaic language whose slow and ponderous rhythm no doubt reflects an ancient pattern probably in verse, the pericope is briefly resumed in a quotation which is even more closely modelled on a verse original: rather than a prose summary of the story it is a portion of the poem transposed into prose. The life of Zoroaster, within the framework of cosmic history, was contained in its entirety in the *Spand* Nask, summarized in Book VIII of the *Dēnkart*, chapter XIV. The prose passages are frequently enlarged with "quotations", whose origin may sometimes be ascribed to the Yašts of our Avesta. Besides, it is evident that the legend's historical unfolding leans on Gathic verse, itself imbued with timelessness and rhetoric. Schaeder spoke of *midraš*, which term probably best describes the transition from the liturgical incantatory to the narrative style. The characteristics of the original were brought out cogently by Marijan Molé.[2]

[1] See J. de Menasce, "A provisional handlist of the late E. W. West's papers preserved in the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society", *JRAS* 1950, p. 59.

[2] M. Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien* (Paris, 1963), pp. 271ff.

The "biography" of the prophet in the *Dēnkart* begins with the constitution of Zartušt's body and before his, the bodies of his parents. The elements which combined to form Zartušt are the *xwarrah*, or light proceeding from Endless Light, the *fravahr* created after the fashion of the Amahraspands, and finally the material essence absorbed by the parents. Even before his birth, and during his early years, he was exposed to the wiles of maleficent beings, demons and sorcerers, who bore the names of hostile chiefs in the Gāthās. He was miraculously protected against them, these miracles all being portents of the glorious future of the "prophet". During his thirties there occurred the central episode of his conversations with the Amahraspands, who by dispensing to him their teaching consecrated him as the bearer of the message contained in the Ahuna Varya, the great prayer of Mazdaism. The second decisive episode is the conversion of King Vištāsp, whom miracles convinced of Zartušt's divine vocation and who was to become the champion of the new "religion".[1] Molé sees Vištāsp as the prototype of the "layman", whereas Zartušt is at once priest and prophet. It might also be said that Vištāsp is the prototype of the royal sacrificer, who dispenses his bounty to the priest and who, by force of arms, sets himself up as defender and propagator of the faith of Mazda and of Iran. Besides the miracles, Vištāsp owed his conversion to a revelation made to him at night by angels sent by Ohrmazd, who also showed him the fate reserved for him after death. Zartušt was then released from prison, where he had been shut up as a result of his enemies' slander and wiles. The narrative goes on to deal with the "war of religion" and with eschatological events; the former is already known to us through the "Memorial of Zarēr", which was perhaps written in Pahlavī verse (with an original in Parthian, or even Avestan?), while the latter form the subject of fairly numerous texts, to which we shall turn below.

After the conversion of Vištāsp, the story of Zartušt as an individual becomes blurred, to the extent that even his violent death makes little impression. This again illustrates the difficulty of determining Zartušt's historicity. The story of his life is part of the historiography of Zoroastrianism, whose stages seem to have resulted from an archaic procedure of combining myths and facts. On the one hand we find the ages of the world, marked by the appearance of the three *sōšyant*s, of whom the last introduces eschatological time (victory over adversaries) and the time of the resurrection. On the other hand we have a highly

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 348–86.

was current in circles strongly tinged with Islam, it took on the colour of Semitic prophetology to such an extent that the earliest Indo-Iranian or even Iranian characteristics are often difficult to distinguish. Molé's searching analysis ought at least to put us on our guard.

BOOKS VIII AND IX OF THE "DĒNKART"

In these books we have a very comprehensive translation of the three Gāthic Nasks, the *Sūtkar*, *Varštmansr* and *Bag*. The *Sūtkar* takes up twenty-three chapters which, in Book VIII, are summarized in some ten lines. The first ten chapters contain a collection of various pericopes linked only by their connection with Gathic wisdom. After chapter xi, the style changes and the narrative becomes interspersed with quotations translated very literally into Pahlavī, recalling epic characters of whom mention is made in the Yašts of the Avesta. Thus, the following passages can be identified as translations: xi, 11–12; xii, 1, 3, 5, 27, 31; xix, 3–5; xx, 4–9; xxi, 2–7, 10, 18–24; xxii, 10–13. The *Varštmansr* comprises chapters xxiv to xlvii, this too being almost entirely epic, and interspersed with quotations. These two Nasks give reason to believe that translations of the Yašts still survived in the Sasanian period, and were drawn on freely for quotations, but for some unknown reason were not preserved in their entirety. Our difficulty in understanding these extracts probably arises from the fact that the context, which alone could throw light on them, was presumed to be known. By contrast the *Bag*, which is a spiritual commentary on the Gāthās, interprets each verse by recourse to analogy. Great emphasis is placed on the relation between disciple and teacher, so as to link the former across generations with Zoroaster himself. Since Book IX of the *Dēnkart* gives so much space to the "summary" of these Nasks, the translations probably formed the basis of teaching during a period (Sasanian and post-Sasanian) when Avestan was little known outside the clergy, but Pahlavī was still a living language.

The same applies to the chapters of Book VIII that deal with the legal Nasks; it is their living application, their usefulness, which explains why they received such detailed treatment. Besides, the law is always conservative; not infrequently passages begin with: "It is said in the Religion . . ." or simply: "It is said somewhere . . ." in books on liturgy or canon law, as well as in such collections of mythological lore as the *Bundahišn*. Unlike the *Mātīgān i hazār dātistān*, of which we shall speak later, and which deals principally with the law of obligations, the Nasks summarized at length in Book VIII of the *Dēnkart*, concern penal law

and agricultural common law. The *Nīkādūm* Nask would appear to have comprised 30 chapters, divided into collections such as the *Patkār-ratistān*[1] which deals with litigation and pleas of evidence, and the *Zahmistān*[2] and the *Rēšistān*[3] devoted to assault, wounding, and other acts of violence. The *Hamēmāristān* deals with true and false accusations and the ways of distinguishing them. Other chapters, having no special title, must have contained a very large number of disparate decisions connected with penal law. The *Duzd-sar vijat* (?) deals with different forms of theft, with everything touching on guard and sheep dogs, with cattle, and with the military. The *Hūsparam* began with the *Ērpatistān* and the *Nīrangistān*, which are here in summarized form, but have survived elsewhere. The *Ērpatistān* does indeed give Avestan text, but a few sentences only, which do no more than recall a context that doubtless used to be known more or less by heart. The Pahlavī translation and commentary develop somewhat the original contents, concerning duties attached to the sacerdotal office. Apart from his responsibility as an itinerant teacher, the priest was the guardian of "property", no doubt sacred buildings and their furniture, and this restricted his movements. However, his wife could take his place at certain sacred offices. Again, a child could be taken by an *ērpat* on his travels, continuing its education – for the most part the memorizing of texts. The *Nīrangistān*, which is much longer with a very explicit commentary, deals with liturgical practice, particularly with the sacrifice of the *drōn* (sacred cake). The text's lacunae and dislocations, in no way corresponding to the summary of the *Dēnkart*, make it rather difficult to understand. There is no doubt that the text has suffered amendments and additions. *Aogemadaēčā* is a short treatise that has also survived with an abridged Avestan text distributed so as to form headings which introduce consecutive Pahlavī text. Its contents are a strange admonition to the living, reminding them of the imminence of inevitable death, for which they must prepare themselves. An intensive study of ritual comparing present practice in Iran and India with that expounded in Pahlavī, Persian, and Gujerati texts has yet to be made, and the editing of the Avestan portions of the *Nīrangistān*, begun by Waag, deserves to be continued. It is clear that this research would greatly benefit works on ancient Indian ritual, since their progress would be based on better documentation.

[1] West, *Pahlavi Texts* IV, p. 35.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 39; *zatamistān* is a pseudo-historical spelling.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

"ZAND I FRAGART I VĪDĒVDĀT"

Only about half of this long and as yet unpublished text is available in Europe, in a copy made by West. It concerns questions and answers relating to matters of ritual purity, the principles of which are set out in the *Vīdēvdāt*. Since the list of commentators quoted in this work is almost the same as in the consecutive commentary that accompanies the Avestan text of the *Vīdēvdāt*, it may be concluded that both are of the same period.

"PATĒT"

These formularies of confession of sins are three in number: the two "Patēts of Repentance" (*patēt i pašīmānk*) and a "True Patēt" (*patēt i xvat*). The three differ only in the amount and order of the material. They cover all the moral and ritual aspects of family and personal life, thus giving a full picture of morality, though from an entirely negative point of view, in the manner of Artā Virāf's journey into hell. To find the positive aspect we must turn to the Andarz literature in all its variety.

"ŠĀYAST NĒ-ŠĀYAST"

This collection of mainly ritual prescriptions is entirely based on older magisterial decisions of which the "genealogy" is given. Thus the two well-known schools of commentators derive, in the case of Mētyōmāh, from Ātur-Ohrmazd through Gōgušasp, and in the case of Āparag, from Āturfarnbag-Narseh through Sōšyans. This, the only available chronological information concerning the commentators, is entirely relative. The subjects treated are as follows: varieties of defilement arising from contact with carrion (chapter ii); uncleanness in women (iii); the wearing of the *kustīk* and possibilities of solecism thereby (iv); the sin of talking while eating (v); the mistakes and meritorious deeds for which a deaf-mute may be responsible; false religions (vi); sun and fire worship (vii); the expiation of sins, particularly through confession and penance (*patēt*) (viii); certain cultic acts, and sundry commandments and interdicts (ix and x).

The text ends here, to be followed, in good manuscripts, by the *Frahang-i Ōīm*, which is an old Avesta-Pahlavī glossary. But another, and very similar series of chapters has been linked to the *Šāyast–nē-šāyast* by modern editors.[1] Here we find chapter xi dealing with animal

[1] West, *Pahlavi Texts* I, pp. 334ff.; Kotwal, *The supplementary texts to the Šāyest nē-šāyest.*

sacrifice, a subject also summarized in the *Pāčag* Nask in book VIII of the *Dēnkart*, chapter vii, and in at least one other Pahlavī text, the *Rivāyat*, chapter lix; chapter xii deals with various ritual subjects; chapter xiii is an exegesis of Gathic verses according to their liturgical use and particularly their apotropaic value; chapter xiv is about the *drōn* and the divisions of the day; chapter xv is a dialogue between Zartušt and Ohrmazd, in which the latter explains his invisibility, and the protective rôle of the Amahraspands; chapters xvi–xvii enumerate prayers to be said in certain circumstances; chapter xviii deals with the importance of the rites of the Myazd and the Gāhānbārs, and with the practice of the Xvētōdas; chapter xix is about the excellence of the Ahunvar prayer; chapter xx is wholly composed of the precepts of the ancient sages (*pōryōtkēšān*), to whom they are expressly attributed in Book VI of the *Dēnkart*, where all are to be found (the two texts may well have been re-copied independently from an older text, the more so since the order of the precepts, as well as the introductory formulas, differ from each other); chapter xxi deals with the manner of computing time, while chapter xxii is devoted to vows to the various deities whose specific domains are set out in chapter xxiii. Subjects of the same kind are dealt with in several chapters of the Pahlavī *Rivāyat* to be discussed later.

A short text in Pāzand called "The son avid of knowledge" is an exposé, in the form of a dialogue between father and son, of the symbolism attached to the wearing of the sacred belt, the kustīk. Its basis is the doctrine, of some antiquity in Mazdaism, of microcosmic man.

"ARTĀ VIRĀF NĀMAK"

This book, one of the most popular in the Mazdean world, is a description of the joys of paradise and, still more, of the pains of hell, its setting being a journey into the beyond made by a pious Mazdean, Artā Virāf, who is chosen by fate to go there and find out if the daily religious acts of the Mazdean community are really acceptable to the gods and of no advantage to the dēvs. The journey is reputed to have taken place in the great Ātur Farnbag fire temple, that is to say in Pārs, during the Sasanian period. Artā Virāf has taken to wife his seven sisters who, attended by priests, spend seven days and seven nights carrying out their devotions around their husband and brother, who has been put to sleep by means of a powerful narcotic. On waking, he tells his story, which is recorded by a scribe. The work is of small literary merit; all the chapters describ-

ing hell and the various punishments are constructed on exactly the same pattern, with endless repetitions. But the interest of the work lies in its purport, namely the need to make sure of the efficacy of ritual, and here the work is curiously reminiscent of the Katha Upanishad in the amount of light it throws on liturgical practice, and in the account it provides of moral life. It was largely to this aspect that its popularity was due in the Mazdean world; large numbers of illustrated versions were produced in Persian and Gujerati, the majority of the former in verse. It is also the first Mazdean work to have been translated into a European language by way of Persian. Independent of linguistic criteria, there is every evidence that the work dates from the Muslim period, that is from a period when, faith and religion being in decline, it became expedient to revive them among the people by a lurid description of the pains of hell. We should note also the recapitulation of the famous ordeal to which Āturpat i Mahraspandān submitted under Shāpūr II, to attest the truth of his religion against the heretics. The work counts as a precursor of Dante's *Divina Commedia*.[1]

"YAVIŠT I FRYĀN"

Yavišt i Fryān, a character known to us only through two brief allusions in the Avesta (in Yašts v and xiii), undertakes to solve the riddles set for him by the sorcerer, Axt; failure spells death. At the beginning of the game, Yavišt protests at a ruse of Axt, who, to contaminate him, had hidden impurities in his dwelling. These having been removed, he is ready to submit to the test of the 33 riddles which he progressively solves. They are of a type familiar in the extensive universal literature of riddles. At the 28th, which concerns the question of feminine preference, Axt, in order to prove Yavišt wrong, calls as witness his wife, Hupars, who is also Yavišt's sister. Faced with the choice between husband and brother, Hupars resolves to tell the truth. On seeing himself foiled, Axt flies into a rage and kills her on the spot; but from then on her place is in paradise. The 29th question is solved thanks only to a revelation from above which saves Yavišt from a dangerous predicament. Having won, he in turn asks three questions which confound Axt and Yavišt kills him. The general nature of the questions and the framework of the story are so common in the folklore of all countries and periods that it would be extremely difficult to put a date to them.

[1] Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature", p. 48, n. 3; Pagliaro, p. 35.

ANDARZ LITERATURE

This form of wisdom literature is of long standing in the East. In the Achaemenian period we have, in the Jewish community of Elephantine, besides fragments of the Aramaic version of the trilingual Behistun inscription, other fragments of the writing known by the name "Wisdom of Aḥiqar". In the Pahlavī summary of the *Bariš* (or *Brēh*) Nask in Book VIII of the *Dēnkart*, chapter ix, besides the moral sayings and lists of virtues and vices, some beginnings of systematization are perceptible, showing that Greek thought, following the tradition of the Nicomachean ethics, must have played a part, perhaps after the arrival of the Greek doctors at the court of Darius. The discoveries, in 1954 and 1958, of the Greek translation of the edicts of Aśoka in Afghanistan, written in learned language with the elegance and assurance of terminology of the best Greek philosophic vocabulary, suggest a much closer contact between the Greek and Iranian worlds than might have been supposed. It is necessary, then, to specify the influence of Greek moral science on its Iranian counterpart. It would appear that the former became superimposed upon the latter, organizing it, rather than providing its basic elements. Thus a system was imposed upon the somewhat indeterminate grouping of virtues and vices, which it classified in relation to an ideal Mean, from which they deviated through excess or deficiency. Vices were not merely opposed to virtues; they could be similar, and this involved other categories. Furthermore, the catalogues linked moral dispositions with their basic institutions, such as the sacred fires. It is difficult to summarize these inventories. We may say, however, that emphasis is placed on the virtues of generosity, courage, truthfulness, wisdom, kindness, the whole being dominated by that Mean which reputedly distinguishes Mazdean ethics and theology from neighbouring religions, these being accused, in particular, of exaggeration and avarice. It will be noticed that the part played by the Mean as a distinctive sign of Mazdaism was later claimed by the very earliest Muslim apologists, and more widely, by the whole of Muslim heresiology.

These collections, called "testaments" (this is the meaning of the word *andarz*; cf. *anandarz* "intestate"), are presented as spiritual declarations made before death by a person, historical or otherwise (Ardashīr, Khusrau for example, but also Sēn and Ōšnar). The word quickly acquired the meaning "counsel", without, for all that, losing its original sense. The testaments known to us in Pahlavī often repeat

themselves and borrow from each other, more or less freely, precepts arranged in no sort of oder. Their style and composition are without marked characteristics. The *Andarz i Pōryōtkēšān* ("Counsel of the Ancient Sages") sometimes wrongly called the *Pandnāmak i Zartušt* ("Book of the counsels of Zartušt") stresses particularly confession of the two principles and the two ways, the certainty of after-life and the retribution awaiting us there. The "Counsel of the Sages" to the Mazdeans deals with man's daily duties and the fragility of life. The end is probably in verse with the same rhyme throughout. The Andarz of Khusrau I, the son of Kavād, supplements this theme with counsels of moderation in matters of virtue, and of staunchness in matters of faith. From Āturpat i Mahraspandān we have "Sayings" and an Andarz whose overlapping texts comprise the most diverse counsels on social morals. An intercalation in the Andarz enumerates occupations recommended for different days of the month. The "Memorial of Vuzurgmihr", which is believed to have been written at Khusrau's behest and deposited in the royal treasury, was mostly recorded in the form of question and answer. There exists a very valuable translation of this in Arabic. Again, of the *Pahlavi Texts* published by J. M. Jamasp-Asana, ten are short Andarz texts, of which half are either acephalous or lack titles; here, among others, are found the names of Vehzāt i Frāv-Pērōz, Āturfarnbag i Fraxvzātān (post-Sasanian), Baxtāfrīt, Āturpāt i Zartuštān, and Mihrpān Xusrau. Also included is a description of "the character and wisdom of a man well endowed by fate", more poetic than most Pahlavī texts, and a curious formula for "mending one's luck".

A somewhat lengthy Andarz by Ōšnar begins with a numbered series of realities, grouped from 1 to 6 (it was said that the number would reach one thousand!). After a lacuna, there follow various questions put by a disciple with the replies of the sage, Ōšnar. The Pahlavī *Rivāyat* (chapter lvxii) contains an Andarz by Mihr-Ōhrmazd recounted by his disciple, Āturpat i Mahraspandān.

The most important of these Andarz works is Book VI of the *Dēnkart*, which purports to recount the sayings of the *pōryōtkēšān* (primitive masters), as well as some precepts, and even anecdotes from the mouths of such doctors of the Sasanian period as Āturpat i Mahraspandān, Āturpat i Zartuštān, Baxtāfrīt, and Vohūdāt i Ātur-Ohrmazdān.[1] The anecdotes show us the ērpat, a member of the lower class of Zoroastrian clergy, as illustrative of an ideal of poverty and simplicity

[1] Ed. and tr. S. Shaked; see bibliography.

which was no doubt to become that of the Muslim dervishes, but which was already apparent in the concern shown for the *drigu* in Avestan prayers. Here, virtues and vices are subjected to learned classification while, apart from morals, the work throws light on points of doctrine and ritual. It contains a mass of information, put together in the utmost disorder. Some paragraphs are found individually in other works, as in the second part of the *Šāyast-nē-šāyast*.

The *Mēnōk i Xrat* "Menokian Wisdom and the Scholar" is one of the earliest known translated books in Pahlavī literature. Its teaching is presented in the form of replies by the Spirit of Wisdom, or transcendent wisdom, to various questions put by a sage. Most of the 63 chapters develop moral themes; a number of others deal with metaphysics (22, 23 and 24) and with cosmology of a more or less mythological nature (44, 49, 56, 57, 62). The first series deals with the relation between human action and fate, between freedom and predestination, problems that cannot fail to arise from reflection, however transitory, the more so in an evironment where a systematized theology already existed. We recall, in this connection, those Jewish and Christian circles in Mesopotamia which are known to have indulged, within the limits dictated by prudence, in discussions with the "Magi". While these problems were to become more acute after the Islamic conquest, with Qur'anic texts providing their own answers, they were certainly not the result of the controversy with Islam. Similarly, there is no need to attribute the Mazdean speculations of the *Mēnōk i Xrat* and the *Bundahišn* to a "heresy" based on the concept of time, as has been done. Speculations on time are of long standing in Mazdaism, and endogenous to it.

Other fragments of the Andarz type are scattered throughout Book III of the *Dēnkart*; these are the series of ten "counsels" imparted to men by Zartušt, Sēn, Āturpat i Mahraspandān and Khusrau i Kavātān, which are answered by pernicious counsels given by mythical heretics such as Axt (Yavišt i Fryān's adversary), and historical ones such as Mānī (chapters 195 to 201).[1]

"Khusrau and the Page" belongs to the same category of writings; its emphasis is more on courtly *savoir vivre* than on morals. A young man, poor and without employment, presents himself to the king, whom he asks to question him in order to test the extent of his knowledge of the most diverse aspects of luxurious living: jesters, women,

[1] De Menasce, *Le troisième livre du Dēnkart*, pp. 202–11.

perfumes, mounts, pleasures of the table. The young man shows himself so adept that the king entrusts him with the task of capturing two lions that were ravaging the district. On his way he meets a beautiful woman who, seeking to tempt him, suggests that they exchange favours. This he refuses to do and, on accomplishing his task, receives his reward at the hands of the king, who praises his self-control. The text is elegant in style and abounds in rare concrete words. A somewhat free Arabic translation is found in the "History of the Kings of Persia" by Thaʿālibī.[1]

This is not the only Arabic translation of an Andarz text. The literary genre experienced considerable development in Islamic literature, both Arabic and Persian. Though late, such translations and adaptations add details to the general literary scene of the Sasanian period. Only few are known to us as yet, but the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm contains a considerable list of them.

The *Kārnāmag i Anōšīrvān*, which is reproduced in full in the *Tajārib al-umam* of Miskawaih,[2] is presented in the form of extracts from the reminiscences and thoughts of Khusrau I. It contains hitherto unpublished information about attempts of a politico-religious nature against the king by sectarians, and about the king's concern for the administration and the preservation of traditional social classes among soldiers and peasants. From it we learn of the king's relations with foreign peoples, notably the Turkish Khazars, whom he rallied to his own support and to whom he sent Mazdean "missionaries"; of the progress of legislation; and of his borrowing from Greek and Hindu culture, without hesitation despite the difference in religious premise.

The "Testament of Ardashīr Pāpakān" which is contained in an Istanbul manuscript (Köprülü 1608),[3] would appear to date from the very last period of the Sasanian dynasty.[4] It deals with royal government in all its major aspects: interdependence of royalty and religion; need for the king to temper severity with mercy; avowed preference for a régime that would inhibit too much reflection among common people, and thereby obviate dissension and rebellion; maintenance of strict class divisions; prudent conduct by the king in regard to his intimates and high officials; mastery of his passions and measure in the exercise of virtue; caution over too hastily announcing the name of the successor to the throne. The same manuscript includes the translation

[1] *Histoire des rois des Perses*, ed. and tr. H. Zotenberg (Paris, 1900), pp. 705–11.

[2] Vol. I, pp. 187–207 (GMS o.s. VII, 1); tr. Grignaschi, pp. 16–28.

[3] Ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās; see bibliography to Ch. 10(*b*). [4] Grignaschi, pp. 1–2.

of a book which Ardashīr is said to have commissioned as an appendix to a treatise "on the tranquil life and the rules concerning food and drink", and "the sweetness of education and the virues". It also discusses the advantageous employment of time; clothes appropriate to a man's condition and circumstances; ceremonial at meals; marks of distinction among men; relations with women in accordance with their psychology and rôle in society; the education of boys; the relation of the king with his people.

The short tract on "the manner in which Khusrau I ordered the ceremony of the address from the throne on the occasion of the Naurōz" confirms what we learn from Tha'ālibī and the *Sūr Saxvan*.[1] "The Letter of Tansar (Tosar)" to the king of Ṭabaristān, familiar in the Persian translation, by Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. Isfandyār (beginning of the 13th century) from an Arabic translation made by the great writer Ibn al-Muqaffa' from the Pahlavī, is probably a transposition; under pretext of describing Ardashīr's good government so as to win over the king of Ṭabaristān, a later and more complex state of affairs is eulogized. Tosar, whom we know from the *Dēnkart* as Ardashīr's religious and legal adviser, reveals himself as an ascetic who had chosen his condition of life to show detachment and thereby gain a hearing from men whom he wishes to influence. Ardashīr achieved the unity of Iran by overcoming the numerous princelings who, in conventional Sasanian historiography, which ignored the intervening Parthian rule, had governed it after Alexander's conquest. Ardashīr's greatest accomplishments were the division of society into four strictly separated classes, the inauguration of sumptuary and successory laws, and the organization of political espionage. Succession to the throne, however, would not seem to have been by primogeniture. Eulogy of the king is mingled with eulogy of race and country, and the argument is coloured by the inclusion of some apologues. The letter certainly enjoyed some popularity, and one of its passages was quoted by Bīrūnī in connection with matrimonial and successoral systems in ancient Persia. It is of no small literary merit.

The work containing the largest number of literal quotations of Pahlavī texts in Arabic translation is the *Jāvidān Xirad* by Abū 'Alī b. Miskawaih, whose interest in Iranian traditions we have noted before. The part devoted to "Persian Wisdom" amounts to an anthology of Andarz texts, most of them in such disarray that it would be hard to

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 129–35.

identify the immediate origin of each. But the work includes a translation of the "Memorial of Vuzurg mihr," of which we possess the Pahlavī original and which enables us to make an accurate comparison and reach certain conclusions about the process of translation.[1] Firstly it is apparent that the Arabic version is based on a better text than the one that has survived. But the translator has taken certain liberties, eliminating the affirmation of dualism and those propositions too obviously Mazdean. The richness of the Arabic vocabulary permits a closer approach to the sense of the Pahlavī words, which without such help we would have to translate in accordance with their etymology alone. Yet the faithfulness of the translation is assured by the fact that the author does not make use of those more or less Aristotelian categories found in his other works.

We have still to exploit the Persian works discovered by Mujtabā Mīnovī in Turkish libraries, which, according to his table of contents, are based on the Andarz of the Sasanian period. Finally, the numerous passages in the *Shāh-nāma*, skilfully versified, leave no room for doubt that Firdausi did use the Pahlavī texts, and must certainly be included in any study or account of the translated literature.

Two short writings also belong here: the *Vičārišn i čatrang* or explanation of the game of chess, and the *Sūr saxvan* or table talk. The former tells of the introduction of chess from India into Iran. King Yasodharman (according to Hansen),[2] Devidarman (Pagliaro),[3] or Sacidharman (Nyberg)[4] sends a game of chess to King Khusrau I challenging him to discover the rules. Taking up the challenge, the sage Vuzurgmihr guesses them and explains them to the Indian king's emissary, who concedes defeat. Vuzurgmihr then retaliates by inviting the Indian to guess the rules of the pre-eminently Iranian game of backgammon (Nēv-Ardašīr). Now these correspond to the workings of the macrocosm of which the game is a miniature version. The Indian sage having been beaten, the king finds himself obliged to pay tribute to Khusrau. This is without doubt the earliest description of the game of chess, though the game is certainly of Indian origin, and as such has a place in the history of our own culture.

[1] D. Gimaret, *Le livre de Bilawhar et Buḏāsf selon la version arabe ismaélienne* (Hautes études islamiques et orientales d'histoire comparée, 3; Geneva–Paris, 1971), pp. 38–41.

[2] In the Acts of the XIXth International Congress of Orientalists (Rome, 1935).

[3] "Sulla più antica storia del giuoco degli scacchi", *RSO* XVIII (1940), pp. 328–40; *idem.*, "Il testo pahlavico".

[4] H. S. Nyberg, *A Manual of Pahlavi* II (Wiesbaden, 1974), p. 171.

The *Sūr saxvan* is a model of table talk, before and after dinner, in which praise is bestowed on the gods and high dignitaries, wishes expressed on man's behalf, and thanks given to all those who took part in the preparation of the banquet. Its interest lies primarily in the enumeration of high officials in order of dignity, giving reason to conclude that it was written at the earliest under Khusrau I. Again, to anyone studying the ordering of the numerous banquets described by Firdausī in the *Shāh-nāma*, the existence of a text of this kind dating from the Sasanian period is not without interest.

THE PAHLAVI "RIVĀYAT" ACCOMPANYING THE "DĀTISTĀN I DĒNĪK"

This is a group of unrelated chapters, bearing on a great variety of subjects. To judge by the introductory words "it is said in a passage..." and by the instructional character of the text, which purports to be the reply of Ohrmazd to a question from Zartušt, some of the chapters would appear to hark back to lost writings of the Avestan canon. Others reproduce verbatim some pages of the *Nīrangistān*. It is not easy to date the book; even a passage stating that the adepts of an evil religion inherited from their parents failed to incur disapprobation, does not prove that Islam was already involved. For a similar statement is found in Book VI of the *Dēnkart* relating to Jews, and another in the *Rivāyat i Ēmēt i Ašavahištān*, which is certainly of the Muslim period. Even though late, the *Rivāyat* contains only such doctrines as must have been current during the Sasanian period.

Some of its chapters are long; chapter 8 is on the Xvētōdas, 17 and 37 are on the sanctity of fires and the manner of their consecration and protection, giving the story of the trial of Keresāsp's soul by the fire that he once "struck" and which seeks to prevent him going to heaven after his death; 46 depicts the creation of the actual elements of Ohrmazd; 47 concerns the conversion of Vištāsp as outlined in Book VII of the *Dēnkart*; 48–50, 52, 54 are about eschatology; 62 is an Andarz and 64, a lapidary that is similar to a Turkish fragment found at Turfān. The remainder deal primarily with ritual and legal dispositions, but are of no less interest than the theological chapters inasmuch as they complete the information found in more systematic works such as the *Bundahišn* and the *Dēnkart*. A certain number of chapters were later translated into the archaic Persian used by Zoroastrian minorities, and incorporated into a collection of traditions called the *Sad-Dar*, from

which, by comparison, some idea may be gained of the excellence of this Pahlavī text.

"ADVĒNAK-NĀMAK I NIPĒŠIŠNĪH"

This book of "models of epistolary style" contains polite formulas for use in various circumstances, happy and unhappy, at the beginning and end of letters addressed to sovereigns or to men of diverse conditions, whether rich or poor. Here we have one of the few examples surviving from the Sasanian period, of a fustian, obscure style that will recur later in the "Epistles of Manūščihr" and in Book IV of the *Dēnkart*, but which had certainly been fully developed under the Sasanians.

A short text entitled "The Duties of a Schoolboy" has been preserved in Pāzand, that is, Pahlavī set down in Avestan characters. It is addressed to children exhorting them to carry out their daily tasks well, especially their school-work. This is a rare piece of evidence on the methods of education in Iran.

We shall now pass to writings of a very different kind, those dealing with history and geography; though not devoid of myth or legend, they are rooted in reality.

"KĀRNĀMAK Í ARDAŠĪR I PĀPAKĀN"

This is one of the most popular books in Pahlavī literature because of its lively, flowing style and the fact that nearly all of it was reproduced in the *Shāh-nāma*. It is the story of the life of the Sasanian dynasty's founder, who is connected on the one hand with the Achaemenians through his descent from the last sovereign of that dynasty, and on the other with the Parthian royal house, through his supposed adoption, although he was Sāsān's son,[1] by his suzerain, Pāpak, a vassal of the last of the Arsacids, Ardavān, who summons the young man to his court. His very courage brings about his disgrace, and he is relegated to the rank of royal groom. The old king's favourite young mistress falls in love with him and helps him to flee; he hastens towards the glorious fate foretold by the stars. A lord called Bēvak offers him his support, thus enabling him to raise an army and to defeat Ardavān, whom he kills and whose daughter he marries. Thus the descendant of the Achaemenians[2] becomes united with the descendant of the

[1] By his marriage to Pāpak's daughter, according to the legend in the *Kārnāmak*, contradicted though by Ardashīr's inscription at Naqsh-i Rustam, where he calls himself Pāpak's son.

[2] Actually the Kayanians, since Dārā (Darius) was considered in Sasanian lore the last king of that dynasty. See pp. 389ff. Ed.

Arsacids and effects the synthesis of dynastic legitimation. The scenes of his deeds as a king who gains his kingdom at the point of the sword, and establishes cities and sacred fires, are Fārs and Kirmān. He fights against the Kurds, also called Medes; against a person named Haftovāt[1] (misspelt Haftānbūxt), king of a region in southern Fārs; against another princeling of Fārs called Mihrak, son of Anōšakzāt, whom he vanquishes after a few reverses. His wife, on the prompting of her exiled brothers, tries to poison him but fails, the plot is discovered, and she is condemned to death. But the mobed charged with her execution takes pity on her because of her pregnancy, and in secret she gives birth to a son, Shāpūr; the mobed does not inform Ardashīr of this until long afterwards when his rage has abated. Meanwhile, astrologers having predicted that his kingdom would revert to Mihrak's line besides his own, he resolves to kill off all his rival's descendants. The only survivor, a girl, goes into hiding and is accidentally discovered by the young Shāpūr, who, without knowing her identity, marries her clandestinely. Ardashīr only learns of it when he sees his grandson, Hormizd; he then knows that the prophecy has been fulfilled. The story, though lacking all embellishment, is very much alive. It appears to be based on a source not quite coincident with Firdausi's, which is founded principally on the *Xwadāy-nāmak*, known to us through Muslim historians. The geographical information, the founding of towns and sacred fires, would seem to be evidence of the book's revision or even of its composition at about the end of the Sasanian period. At least we know from Ibn al-Nadīm that a work with the same title had been translated from Pahlavī into Arabic.

"SHAHRISTĀNHĀ I ĒRĀNSHAHR"

This is a catalogue of the principal towns of Iran, classified according to the four regions that divide the country, with information about their founders, whether mythical or historical, and sometimes about the circumstances of their foundation. It is certainly late and should not be considered a reliable source on every score. Even after Markwart's fine research, which led to the appearance of his annotated edition, further work is needed. The same is true in respect of the many geographical chapters of the *Bundahišn* (see below), which are extremely confused and full of repetition, and mingle myth with history and

[1] W. B. Henning, "Ein persischer Titel im Altaramäischen" in M. Black and G. Fohrer (eds), *In Memoriam Paul Kahle* (Berlin, 1968), pp. 138–45.

geography. To the same category of writings belongs a short text on the "Miracles of Sīstān'.

THE LAW BOOK

The only original work to come into this category, which must also be seen as complementing the chapters of Book VIII of the *Dēnkart*, summarizing the titles of the legal Nasks, is the *Mātigān i hazār dātistān*. This is not a codex but a collection of laws and decrees, often accompanied by jurists' precepts, grouped into subjects but without any definition or explanation of the legal principles involved. Here it does not differ from the "codices" of ancient Mesopotamian civilizations. Neither does it cover the whole of Sasanian law: penal and agarian law is almost entirely omitted. But on the subject of civil and family law and the law of contractual obligations, it is the only book that gives us a true idea of social relations in Sasanian society as seen from within. This is what renders its study of great importance. The content is given below, in accordance with the numeration of chapters proposed by Bulsara, but it must be remembered that the work has survived in one manuscript only, a manuscript both defective and incomplete.[1]

Evidence (1), advocates (2), plaintiffs (3), slaves (5), societies (6), divorce (7), the representative (8), deterioration and other hazards to which legal documents may be subject (9), interdiction (10), ordeal and oath (11), payments to be made on family wealth (12), the transfer of property (13), the daughter "*ēvakēn*" (14), the "potestas" (15), preliminary payment without security (16), food and maintenance (17), the establishment of fires and sacrifices (18), marriage with a *pātixšāyīhā* woman (19), the *guharēn* ("exchange, compensation") (20), pawning (21), partnership of two men for the construction of a *qanāt* (22), the *stūrīh* (23), sharing and participation (24), the performance of an obligation contracted with associates (25), the half-portion and declared value (26), security binding on several (27), declaration of possession (28), possession of property (29 and 37), association (30), words designating a contractual agreement (31), adoption (32), fines and the contracts specifying them in case of non-performance (33), earnest money (34), profits and their division (35), disobedience of women and children in respect of their *sardār* (36), formulas describing effective possession (38), specific legal formulas (39), the competence of officials (40), written and sealed documents (41), judgements in accord (42),

[1] See chapter 18 on Sasanian law. Ed.

judgements known through old documents, written and sealed (43), judgements giving the opinion of *dastūrs* (44).

The author gives his name, Farraxvmart i Vrahrāmān, in a preface which unfortunately is very badly preserved. We can deduce from it that he was writing at a time when the law of the Sasanian empire was still being administered in its entirety, and the authority and powers of the King of Kings were still recognized. But is it fact or is it a legal fiction combining both the hope and the expectation that the fallen dynasty be restored? The kings named in the *Mātigān* run from Yazdgard I (399–421) to Khusrau Parvīz (590–628). To all intents and purposes, this marks the end of the Sasanian period and, if the book is of later date, there is nothing to prevent it describing conditions that no longer correspond with actuality. There are other examples in the history of civilization of legal systems that continued to be studied and commented on, even though they had in fact been abolished. As for the names of the places cited, whether as hypothetical examples or as administrative centres with their own customs, these relate to the whole of southern Iran, notably to Fārs. A large number of jurists, whose opinions sometimes conflict, are cited as authorities, the author on occasion proclaiming his partiality. It remains to be seen whether general tendencies are discernible in the interpretation of law or custom according to the jurisconsult or his school. The last chapter headings indicate that legal procedure was sometimes based on precedent, rather than on written laws.

A short writing entitled the "Contract of the Master of the House" provides illustration on several details given in the *Mātigān* on "plenary" marriage, in particular about the size of the dowry.

"SELECTIONS OF ZĀTSPRAM" AND THE "BUNDAHIŠN"

Two works must now be considered which are of great importance in the study of the post-Avestan development of the great myth of Ahriman's struggle against Ohrmazd and his creatures. They are incontestably later than the Sasanian period but, we believe, contain nothing attributable to contact with Islam, or falling outside the common province of Mazdean faith and knowledge. Each, according to its fashion, draws on ancient sources, but it is evident that certain chapters here and there are based on the same texts and thus are mutually illuminating.

The earlier of the two, the "Selections of Zātspram", is presented as a conglomerate of several points separated by colophons and headings.

Yet it forms an harmonious whole and is pleasing stylistically. The writer was the brother of Manuščihr, an important author, mentioned earlier; the brothers squabbled about points of ritual. Both may be placed in the reign of the Caliph al-Ma'mūn (813–33). Nothing in Zātspram's writings throws any light on the contemporary political or religious situation; his teaching is wholly traditional. The work is divided into four parts: (1) cosmogony and cosmology, concise and unrepetitive; (2) the life of Zoroaster, less comprehensive though more explicit than that in Book VII of the *Dēnkart*; (3) several chapters on the psychology of man and on the human condition; (4) two long eschatological chapters, to be discussed later. Altogether it is an outline of the history of the cosmos from the beginning until the Transfiguration, with a description of the world's great entities, and notably of man, from the time of Ahriman's first onslaught on Ohrmazd, leading to the creation of the cosmic machine that will definitively expel the adversary. In the middle of this history there is the coming of the Religion to Zoroaster.

Some of the sources are explicitly given: the Gatha 31 (in 9.6); the *Dāmdāt* Nask (in 3.43 and 3.57); the *Spand* Nask (in 35.18); a certain book of the Religion, the work of the Ancients, mentioned only here (in 4.8); and finally, a book about the explanation of the ceremony of the Yasna (in 6.1); but other Avestan texts are discernible behind their translations. Events are ordered in accordance with astrological signs little more than hinted at.

The *Bundahišn* ("Original Creation") was first known in Europe in its short recension, much inferior to the long recension, which was not published until 1908; it is also known as *Zand-ākāsīh* ("Knowledge of the Zand"), a title suggested by one of the initial sentences. The plan of the work is set out at the beginning: the opposition of the two first principles; the nature of the creatures of the *gētīk* from the beginning until the Eschatological Body; the things that are in the world. But the book is chaotic and, particularly where cosmology is concerned, a mass of repetitions. The author reveals his name in the penultimate chapter which gives a valuable genealogy of the mobeds: he appears to have been a certain Farnbag, called Dātakīh (?), of a family to which other famous mobeds belonged, such as Zātspram and Ēmet i Ašavahištān. A final appendix reviews the great divisions of the history, declaring that the book was written in A.Y. 447 (A.D. 1098), to which a copyist added the date A.Y. 527 (A.D. 1178).

When considering this plan, which is very near to that of Zātspram,

one is struck by the absence of the Legend of Zoroaster. This is difficult to explain except, perhaps, on the supposition that, while the author expanded on his predecessor's work where he saw reason for doing so, in the case of the Legend, he found himself anticipated by the author of Book VII of the *Dēnkart*. But this is only a working hypothesis.

The first chapter has no heading. It begins by outlining the nature and situation of the two primordial adversaries and the attraction which the good creation while still in the spiritual (*mēnōk*) state, that is, before its corporeal realization, would exercise on Ahriman. Ohrmazd, with a presentiment of Ahriman's aggressive designs, offers him a pact of peace. When the latter refuses, Ohrmazd's only course is to prepare creation for a struggle and to regulate time so that its course will assure his victory. While Ahriman is unaware that the outcome of the struggle will be his elimination, Ohrmazd knows that he will defeat the demon more surely by giving him respite and by securing the collaboration of the creatures. He utters the Ahuna Varya (Ahunavar) prayer of transcendent efficacy, which with its three verses symbolizes the three dimensions of time, and with its twenty-one words the whole of the Avesta. There follows a new stage of creation which transfers the mēnōk into the gētīk, producing the gētīk proper, the corporeal world, where fresh struggles take place against the various realms of creation within the framework of astrological situations, giving rise to a celebrated chapter on the *thema mundi*.

The relatively numerous chapters or paragraphs dealing with astrology explain and illustrate the doctrine according to which the sky, which embraces the world, prevents the maleficent luminaries, notably the planets, from propagating their malice, while time, regulated by Ohrmazd, assures success by favourable conjunctions.

It then goes on to extremely detailed descriptions of the material world: luminaries, countries, mountains, seas, rivers, lakes, animals, and finally, man with his origin and the attendant myths of civilization. There follow chapters on what is of service to man: women, birds, vegetables. Chapter 17 indicates the "chieftains" (*rat*s) of the various species of being. Then come chapters on the Fires of Mazdaism, and sleep, followed by cosmography: winds, clouds, rain. The list of maleficent beings precedes that of the beings who oppose them. Two long chapters give a complete inventory of the pantheon and the pandemonium: the great gods head the groups lending a certain, if factitious, coherence to the whole. There is more method in the system

of oppositions between gods and demons. Chapter 28 is concerned with the conception of microcosmic man. Translated in 1923 by A. Goetze,[1] who saw in it a characteristically Iranian conception that had penetrated into Greece very early, exercising a decisive influence on the *De Hebdomadibus* of the Pseudo-Hippocrates, the chapter continues to be the subject of heated discussion. It is probable that the Greek doctors summoned to Darius' court were able to bring back from Iran doctrines unfamiliar to their own country; and indeed, the *De Hebdomadibus* stands out as an anomaly in its time. But all the Iranian texts on this theme are late, as too was its dissemination among Jewish and among Syriac-speaking Christian societies, which gives reason to believe that the theory, as expounded here, is of no great age.

Chapter 29 reverts to geography, as does chapter 31, which is a replica of chapter 1 of the *Vīdēvdāt*, while chapter 32 deals with the buildings constructed by the heroes of the Kayanian dynasty. Chapters 30 and 34 are on the subject of individual and universal eschatology, and will be discussed later. With chapter 35 we return to the succession of mythical and historical kings of Iran, and this is followed by a genealogy of the great mobed families, which is probably authentic but remains somewhat obscure, since no dates are given, and the majority of the mobeds bear the names of their grandfathers. The book ends with a survey of the history of the world within the framework of astrology.

The fact that both books open with an account of the primordial struggle has given rise to a theory, not devoid of support, that here, blended with orthodox doctrine, is a current of "Zurvanite" thought, according to which time is a sort of "great god" superior to Ohrmazd and Ahriman, just as in the well-known myth, current during the Sasanian period, but explicitly rejected by Mazdeans.[2] The antiquity of the myth that sees the two gods, the creators of the good and evil worlds, as the twin sons of Zurvān, is arguable. The recurrence of traces of this doctrine in the *Bundahišn* and the "Selections of Zātspram" is more than a little doubtful, and the exegesis of the texts in question would seem to permit of a much simpler interpretation.[3]

It is evident, then, that the *Bundahišn* is a work of no great originality, since its opening has been virtually borrowed from Zātspram and the

[1] "Persische Weisheit im griechischen Gewande", *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik* II (Leipzig, 1923), pp. 60ff.
[2] See particularly Zaehner, *Zurvan.*
[3] See also pp. 898ff, 975 on the Zurvanite current in Zoroastrianism. Ed.

additions contribute nothing that is essential; but it has many fragments of myth combined notably with authentic geography and with a cosmography whose scope is without equal in any of the later works, which are more concerned with religious philosophy.

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL GENRE

The apocalyptic eschatological genre is represented in Pahlavī literature by two independent works: the *Zand i Vohuman Yašt*, of which mention has already been made in connection with the translations of the Avesta, and the *Ayātkār i Zāmāspīk*. In addition, there are important chapters which form part of the "Selections of Zātspram", the *Bundahišn* and the Pahlavī *Rivāyat*. The major part derives from these writings, traces of which are also discernible in the summaries of the Nasks.

The *Ayātkār i Zāmāspīk* is presented in the form of a series of dialogues between King Vištāp and his minister Jāmāsp (already known from the Gāthās), who is reputedly Zartušt's successor and the receptacle of his spiritual gifts, notably omniscience and prophetic spirit. When questioned by the king on the beginnings of human kind, the sage reviews the succeeding generations, starting with Gayōmart, a series of traditional stories with some variants, their background being the same as that upon which the *Shāh-nāma* was to be based. The description of the other races of the known world discloses the mythical races, to which Pliny alludes, as also the peoples of Māzandarān, and the Turks of very recent history. There follows a list of the kings of the Sasanian dynasty, the book being indubitably later than these. It ends with a chapter of great importance to the history of apocalyptic ideas and their revival in the first centuries after Christ: this is an enumeration of the disorders and upheavals that will afflict humanity at the end of time. Next, a more specifically Mazdean development recalls the victories of those gods – among them Mihr, Srōš, Rašn, Neryosang – and heroes who play a more properly eschatological rôle. Among the latter are Pešōtan, Kai Khusrau, Keresāsp and, most important, the three champions of the successive eras, Ōšētar, Ōšetarmāh and, lastly, Sōšyāns, who brings about the Transfiguration, the *fraškart*, and purifies the world for all time.

All this information is found in chapters 33 and 24 of Zātspram, chapter 48 of the Pahlavī *Rivāyat*, chapter 62 of the *Mēnōg i Xrat*, the second part of the short writing *Māh Fravartīn*, *rōč Hordāt*, questions 35 and 98 in the *Dātistān i Dēnīk*, and chapters 34 and 35 of the *Bundahišn*,

all of which derive, through the *Zand i Vohuman Yašt*, from the chapters of the *Spand* Nask, summarized in the *Dēnkart* VIII. 14, and in the *Sūtkar* Nask (*ibid.* IX. 14, 20, 22). This very copious material was undoubtedly disseminated wherever the influence of Mazdean magi made itself felt; traces recur in the "Oracles of Hystaspes" quoted on several occasions in the *Divinae Institutiones*, a writing by the Christian Lactantius, and even in certain earlier authors such as Justinian and Clement. The oldest eschatological current is associated with the legend of Vištāsp and Jāmāsp and, if one may venture a hypothesis that has been confirmed in the case of a much later Indian book, it could be said that through all this literature there runs a theme parallel to that which, in India, produced the Puranas: an outline of the future, divided into long periods each ushered in by a renewal, a re-ordering of the world under the impulse of one of Zartušt's posthumous descendants, of whom the last will be truly the world's final and definitive saviour; for, contrary to the Indian outline, the time of the world does not recur. These last stages are marked by sacrifices that are the counterpart of the creative sacrifice.

It is hardly surprising that these writings should have formed the framework to very late "prophecies" on the Mazdak heresy, the Turkish invasions and even those of the Arabs. Such a system of interpolation is found elsewhere at précisely the same time.

The success of this eschatological literature and its survival among Mazdean minorities is attested by the popularity of the Zāmāspīk, widely disseminated in Persian translation.

CHAPTER 32(*b*)

THE MANICHAEAN MIDDLE PERSIAN WRITINGS

The impact of Manichaeism on Middle Iranian literature has already been considered in connection with Parthian; but although Mānī was himself of Parthian blood, Middle Persian was in fact the first language which the prophet used in seeking to spread his faith in Iran. The reason for this was that the political situation had changed greatly there during his own boyhood. He was born under the last of the Arsacids, in A.D. 216; but some eight years later Ardashīr Pāpakān, founder of the Sasanian dynasty, overthrew Ardavān V, and the imperial power passed from Parthia to Persia once more. Accordingly, when Mānī resolved to make his teachings known to the King of Kings, it was at the court of Ardashīr's son, Shāpūr I, that he presented himself. He brought with him, it seems, a work dedicated to this ruler, entitled *Shābuhragān* "the Book of Shāpūr". In this he had set out a summary of his new doctrines; and some pages of it survive. Whether Mānī himself wrote the actual Middle Persian version is doubtful, for years later, after long sojourn at the Sasanian court, he still chose to be accompanied by an interpreter at an audience with Shāpūr's son, Bahrām I; and though this may have been a largely unnecessary precaution, taken because his life was then at stake, nevertheless the action does not suggest that he was an assured linguist. Probably, therefore, as a young man he wrote the *Shābuhragān* in his mother-tongue, Aramaic, and had it translated into Middle Persian. The language of this and all other Manichaean Middle Persian texts is dialectally much purer than Zoroastrian Middle Persian, commonly known as Pahlavī; for the latter is a literary *koine*, which evidently during the later centuries of Sasanian rule absorbed a large admixture of Parthian words. But in the 3rd century A.D. Parthian, both spoken and written, was still flourishing as an independent language in the north and east; and the chief Manichaean works in it and in Middle Persian were translated or composed before the latter, as the new language of state, became dominant and began to oust the rival speech, absorbing in the process a quantity of its vocabulary. The Manichaean missions

to Persia and Parthia were, moreover, quite independent of one another, and established separate literary traditions, with their own renderings of all the canonical works, and a distinct secondary literature. The fact that linguistically Manichaean Middle Persian is homogeneous, and that the oldest work in it, the *Shābuhragān*, was composed for the Persian ruler himself, would seem to establish that this dialect represents the speech of the Sasanian court, the "King's Persian" of the 3rd century.

The surviving passages from the *Shābuhragān*[1] have the same characteristics which are found in Parthian renderings of the prophet's writings, namely long, clumsily constructed sentences, which sometimes founder without a proper conclusion. As has been already noted in connection with the Parthian texts, there is reason to think that the fault is not Mānī's, but lies more probably in the fact that in Iran written prose was only gradually evolving at this time to compass more than plain and practical statement (as needed for chronicles, official communications, business letters, legal documents and the like). In dealing with these works of Mānī's the translators thus met a double challenge to their limited skill: they had to render texts out of a Semitic tongue, whose syntax and vocabulary were wholly different from those of their own; and they had to deal with matter beyond the ordinary scope of the contemporary written language, namely exposition of complex doctrine, with argument, simile and sometimes elaborate analogies.

Apart from the *Shābuhragān*, composed especially for the Persians, there were seven canonical works written by Mānī which must all have been translated into the vernacular of every land reached by the faith; for Mānī was supremely a prophet of the written word. The teachings of all earlier apostles of God, he held (and he venerated as such, in particular, Zoroaster, the Buddha and Jesus), had become corrupted by their followers, just because they had been promulgated orally, instead of being set down immutably in books. He insisted, therefore, that his own utterances, enshrined by himself in written Aramaic, should be translated into the local tongue by his missionaries wherever they went. For the Iranian versions of his scriptures the clear, elegant Aramaic script was retained which Mānī himself had used, and which could be adapted as readily for these languages as the Chancellery

[1] For details of the publication of these and other Middle Persian fragments from Mānī's own works see M. Boyce, *A Catalogue of the Iranian Manuscripts in Manichean Script*..., Register, p. 147.

Aramaic script of earlier days. (Only in Sogdia the Manichaeans sometimes also used their own difficult and distinctive alphabet, itself descended from this Chancellery Aramaic.) But although all the canonical works must have been translated into Middle Persian in the 3rd century, it has not been possible to recover passages from every one of them; for the manuscripts (mostly of fine paper, written on with good, enduring ink) which were discovered early this century by archaeologists in Central Asia had almost all been reduced to fragments, variously torn, charred, worm-eaten or water-stained. The original damage, it is thought, was probably done by Muslim soldiers from the 8th century onwards, who in conquering the region occupied the Manichaean monasteries and deliberately destroyed their libraries, filled, in their eyes, with the wicked words of unbelievers. The work of destruction continued down to modern times, however; for when settlements expanded again in those parts, the buried ruins were sometimes flooded by new irrigation, or peasant farmers, digging over the ground, came upon and once more deliberately destroyed the strange and devilish-seeming writings.[1] The fragmentary nature of what survives has proved a discouragement to its study; and despite decades of devoted work by a handful of scholars, much of the material is still unpublished.

Of Mānī's own works the first in importance appears to have been his "Gospel".[2] This kept in Middle Persian its Greek title of *Evangelion*, variously qualified by the epithets "living" or "great". It was divided into twenty-two chapters, each beginning with a successive letter of the Aramaic alphabet. Part of a conventional exordium to it survives in Middle Persian, as well as the beginning of the first chapter. In the exordium Mānī describes himself as "the apostle of Jesus the Friend" (Yišōʿ Aryaman). The use of the name of the Iranian *yazad* Aryaman as an epithet for Jesus illustrates how the Manichaean missionaries sought to adapt their message so as to make it acceptable to Zoroastrians. This was evidently not done cynically, for their prophet himself believed that Zoroaster had taught the one true faith, which

[1] For vivid accounts of such recent damage see the fascinating general book on the work of the second and third German archaeological expeditions to Turfan by A. von Le Coq, *Auf Hellas Spuren in Ostturkistan* (Leipzig, 1926, repr. 1973), tr. A. Barwell as *Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan* (London, 1928).

[2] This was probably also the first in order of composition. *Pace* G. Widengren, there are no grounds for assigning such a position to the *Shābuhragān*. On the canonical books as known in Iran, see W. B. Henning in G. Haloun and W. B. Henning, "The compendium of the doctrines and styles of the teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light", *Asia Major* III (1952), 204ff.

his own gospel was designed to restore to its original uncorrupted state. It is therefore quite possible that Jesus the "friend" and "physician" was actually identified by Mānī's propagandists with the Iranian Aryaman, the Friend and Healer. Through this custom of identifying Mānī's divinities with Zoroastrian ones the Manichaean literature provides some useful evidence for the knowledge of Zoroastrianism in the 3rd century A.D. Thus it is interesting to find significant divergences between the adaptations of Mānī's teachings made for Persian and for Parthian listeners. Zurvān, for instance, is prominent in the Manichaean Middle Persian texts, but this divinity's name never occurs in the Parthian ones, which otherwise in parts are of a strongly Zoroastrian character. Such facts not only provide additional evidence for the existence of regional Zoroastrian churches at that time, but help to dispel the popular misconception that the Parthians, unlike the Persians, abandoned Zoroastrianism under the Arsacids.

The second Manichaean canonical work was the "Treasure of Life", referred to in Middle Persian both by its Aramaic title (*smṯyh'*) and by what appears to be a rendering of this, *Niyān ī Zīndagān* "Treasure of the Living". No passages from this book have been identified, however. Not even the title of the third work, the *Pragmateia*, occurs in the surviving Middle Persian fragments, but the fourth, the "Book of Secrets", was called appropriately *Rāzān* "Secrets". Again, no passages from it are known in Middle Persian; but fragments of the fifth work, the "Book of Giants", in Middle Persian, Parthian and Sogdian, have been laboriously pieced together.[1] This book contained Mānī's version of the fall of the angels, transformed by him (in accordance with his own doctrines) into demons, and the vanquishing of their giant sons by the four archangels. This book is called in Western Middle Iranian *Kawān* (the plural of the old word *kavi*, more familiar through the Iranian heroic tradition as *kay*, *kayān*). In it there are a number of instances of foreign proper names being replaced by Iranian ones, such as Sām and Narīmān; and in one of the Sogdian fragments the name of the ancient homeland of the Iranians, Airyanəm Vaējah, is introduced as Aryān Vēžan. This name is otherwise known only in the Zoroastrian tradition from which the Manichaean missionaries borrowed it.

The other two canonical books were collections rather than homogeneous works. One, the "Epistles", consists of letters written by

[1] See Henning, "The Book of the Giants".

Mānī to various leaders and congregations of his community. In Iranian these appear to have been known collectively as the *Dīwān* (plural of *dib* "letter"). Brief citations from them survive in Middle Persian, consisting in the main of short direct sentences, but with a characteristic use of parables to illustrate a point. Mānī's propagandists imitated their prophet in teaching through parables, adapting for this purpose local stories. In this way eastern tales (taken sometimes from Buddhists) were given currency among the far-flung Manichaean communities, from the borders of India and China through Iran to Syria and further west. The Manichaeans thus became important agents in making oriental fables known to Europe.[1] The Iranian versions which survive are mostly in Sogdian, but there are a few examples also in Middle Persian and Parthian. In general their style is laconic and the incidents undeveloped, as if the written text existed only as a mnemonic to prompt the preachers who would give its skeleton flesh and blood for an immediate audience. For centuries after this the spoken word remained much more effective in Iran than the written, and only a minority had access to the latter.

The seventh canonical work seems to have been a devotional one, and included prayers (none of which has been identified in Middle Persian) and two long psalms composed by Mānī. The text of one of these is fairly well represented in Parthian, in which language it is called the *Wuzurgān Āfrīwan* "the Blessing of the Great Ones". A few fragments from this long text survive also in Middle Persian and Sogdian. The psalm appears to consist of sustained praises addressed to the Father of Greatness and the gods of the Third Creation (that group of Manichaean divinities who are actively concerned with this present world and its inhabitants). It is markedly formal in construction, each of the sections into which it is divided being characterized by a set phrase which recurs frequently within it. The other psalm is probably represented by the text entitled in Parthian *Qšūdagān Āfrīwan* "Blessing of the Sanctification", which is similar in structure and content.

The list of the "seven great scriptures" is regularly accompanied by mention of the Drawing. This was apparently an elaborate picture called the *Ārdahang*, which Mānī painted in order to illustrate his cosmology and the workings of the worlds of Light and Darkness. It was, it seems, the existence of this picture (whose name survived in

[1] On this see Henning, "Sogdian Tales", *BSOAS* x (1945), 465–87.

later Persian tradition as *Artank*, *Arzang* and the like) which established Mānī's fame as a painter. He himself seems to have valued painting in general as a means of inspiring and uplifting the thoughts; and some of the surviving Manichaean manuscripts are not only beautifully written, but also finely illuminated.[1] There appears to have been a commentary with the *Ārdahang*, for there exist in Parthian fragments of a text called the *Ārdahang Wifrās*; but this is a curious work, surviving only in that language. The fragments consist largely of extended similes; and without the title there would be no reason to connect them with the Drawing itself.

The canon included the Tradition. This embodied discourses of the prophet, which were, it is claimed, collected and written down by his disciples during his lifetime; but some matter has plainly been incorporated later. These homilies are best preserved in a Coptic version, known by the Greek title *Kephalaia*, but fragments exist also in the Iranian languages. The style is, as one would expect, a plain prose one, without the syntactical complexity of Mānī's theological works.

A Middle Persian text which is probably almost as old as the versions of the canonical books is a translation of the Christian apocryphal work the "Shepherd of Hermas", which was adopted in Manichaeism as an allegory of human life. The style of the one surviving piece[2] is again clumsy and involved, as if the translator had found it hard to render the original adequately. Other evidently early prose texts are two accounts, one of Mānī's last audience with Bahrām I,[3] the other of his death.[4] Both are composed by eye-witnesses, and so presumably date from A.D. 274 (or 276) or soon afterwards. They are alike in being written very simply, in brief sentences, with repetitive and sometimes ambiguous use of the third person pronoun; and they support therefore the impression that Middle Persian prose was at this time still in its infancy.

There exist also fragments in Middle Persian, Parthian and Sogdian of a Manichaean church history, which contained the story of Mānī's own life and works, together with accounts of early missions by his followers and their struggles against the heathen, not unaided by

[1] See A. von Le Coq, *Die Buddhistische Spätantike in Mittelasien*, Part II, *Die manichäische Miniaturen* (Berlin, 1923).

[2] M 97; see F. W. K. Müller, "Eine Hermas-Stelle in manichäischer Version", *SPAW* 1905, pp. 1077–83.

[3] M 3; see Henning, "Mani's Last Journey", *BSOAS* x (1942), 948–53.

[4] M 454; see Andreas and Henning, "Mitteliranische Manichaica III", text q.

miracles.[1] Here the style is plain and practical, again with short sentences, possibly in an established Iranian tradition of chronicle-writing. Other Middle Persian prose works of the Manichaeans include rules of conduct for the faithful, fragments of homilies and texts of instruction set out in the form of question and answer (a type of oral didactic literature found also in the Zoroastrian books). There are also a number of fragments concerned with cosmogony (a vital matter in Manichaean doctrine), mostly in Middle Persian.[2] A few prayers survive, and a fragment of a confessional, together with some scraps of texts dealing with astronomical and calendar matters, and one or two others which, if less reputable, are of considerable interest for Iranian folklore, since they contain charms against fevers and amulets to ward off demons.[3]

The latest dated Manichaean prose text in Middle Persian is one composed far from the borders of Persia proper. This is an introduction to a hymn-book, which was written at Qarashahr in Chinese Turkestan between A.D. 825 and 832.[4] It is evidently the work of Sogdians who were using Middle Persian as a church-language, and contains one or two Parthian and also New Persian forms. A handful of other texts can likewise be judged to be of Sogdian authorship, with a similar mixture of forms and a limited, conventional vocabulary.

The greater part of the Middle Persian Manichaean literature, like the Parthian, is, however, in verse, much of which appears to be original, although influenced in certain formal respects by Aramaic models. Poetry is evidently an older and far more widely cultivated literary form in Iran than prose, and traditionally it was sung or chanted rather than recited. Music was in any case encouraged by Mānī as an art that elevated and purified the soul, and hymn-singing accordingly played a large part in Manichaean worship, especially probably in the monasteries. In most manuscripts verse-texts are written continuously, like prose, presumably to save space; but the ends of lines and verses are usually clearly marked with coloured points; and in a few instances the texts are set out in verse lines, often with a device in the margin to indicate that alternate verses were to be sung as a "response". This antiphonal singing seems to have originated with the mother-church in Babylonia. A number of other texts are written in "cantillated"

[1] See Henning, "Neue Materialen zur Geschichte des Manichäismus"; Sundermann, "Iranische Lebensbeschreibungen Manis".

[2] See Sundermann, *Mittelpersische und parthische kosmogonische . . . Texte.*

[3] See Henning, "Two Manichaean Magical Texts".

[4] M 1; see Müller, "Maḥrnāmag".

form, with the syllables divided up, apparently to help the Sogdian monks with their chanting of the Western Iranian texts.[1] The extent of the material and the existence of such technical aids make it possible to investigate Iranian verse forms more readily in this Manichaean literature than in the Zoroastrian Avesta; and it was through a study of the Manichaean hymns that it was established[2] that pre-Muslim Iranian poetry was an unrhymed, stress verse, with slightly irregular metrical patterns (like, for instance, Anglo-Saxon or Old High German poetry).

Although the Manichaean metres are thus traditionally Iranian, the hymns contain formal elements which are foreign, notably a common abecedarian device, whereby each verse of a hymn begins with a successive letter of the Aramaic alphabet – a literary convention wholly alien to the oral Iranian tradition, which appealed to the ear, not the eye. A certain amount of the imagery is also of foreign inspiration, but this is blended with truly Iranian similes, and with some symbolism which derives directly from Zoroastrian tradition. A striking instance of this occurs in one of the two long hymn cycles of which verses survive in Middle Persian. Both are devoted to the "Living Self" (their titles are *Gōwišn īg Grīw Zīndag* and *Gōwišn īg Grīw Rōšn*), which is the Manichaean divinity who personifies the elements of light scattered through the physical world. This concept appears to have been presented to Zoroastrian listeners partly in terms of their own ancient doctrine of the seven "creations" which make up or people this world, and which were venerated by them together with the Gathic divinities who watch over them; and so in verses from one of these cycles the all-pervading Living Spirit is made to use imagery from the "creation" of Fire, which likewise runs through everything. "I am the Fire" (he declares) "which Zoroaster tended, and which he bade the righteous tend...From the seven consecrated, sweet-smelling fires carry to me, the Fire, purified fuel. Bring clean firewood, and delicate and fragrant incense. Kindle me with knowledge, and give me clean oblations."[3] A number of the shorter Manichaean hymns are devoted to the praises of individual gods, somewhat in the manner of the Zoroastrian Yašts. Others celebrate the Manichaean holy day of the week, Monday, or

[1] See Machabey, "La Cantillation manichéenne".

[2] See Henning, "The Disintegration of the Avestic Studies".

[3] On these verses (contained in M 95) see Boyce, "*Ātaš-zōhr* and *Āb-zōhr*", *JRAS* 1966, pp. 100–1; that this is poetic symbolism, not ritual instruction, is established by the fact that Manichaeans must have abhorred the animal sacrifices which furnished the actual Zoroastrian oblations to fire.

the great annual Bema ceremony; and these tend to be more didactic in character, with fewer Iranian elements.

The Middle Persian Manichaean literature is thus in the main eclectic (in content, style and structure), like the doctrines of the faith which gave it birth; but the native literary tradition brought it about that the authors of hymns appear to compose with greater assurance and mastery than the prose writers. Only a few of their works, however, can be considered true poetry (and possibly through the chance of survival, such rarities are better represented in Parthian than in Middle Persian). Nevertheless, although the Manichaean texts do not in general attain high literary quality, they remain of great interest and value, since (apart from inscriptions) they are among the oldest *written* compositions in the Persian language, and form a unique corpus of work produced at a crucial stage in the development of the ancient literary tradition of Iran.[1]

The fact that, as Manichaeism spread north-eastwards into Central Asia, Middle Persian and Parthian came to be used by the Sogdians as venerable church-languages brought it about that a number of glossaries were written there, giving Sogdian equivalents for the less common Western Middle Iranian words.[2] Knowledge of such words, both from these glossaries and from the Middle Persian texts themselves, has proved a valuable aid to understanding the more extensive Pahlavī literature, whose difficult script makes it impossible to decipher unknown words with certainty. Moreover, the Manichaean works, belonging as they do in origin to Sasanian Persia proper, have provided useful evidence for niceties of Middle Persian syntax and grammar, which in the longer-lived Zoroastrian literature often became contaminated by New Persian usages. Despite their now fragmentary character, therefore, the Manichaean Middle Persian writings have proved an invaluable discovery of the 20th century, not only for knowledge of Manichaeism itself, but also for the study of the languages and literature of Iran.[3]

[1] On the slow transition at about this time from a predominantly oral to a largely written literature in Iran see in some detail Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature".

[2] See Henning, *Sogdica* (London, 1940).

[3] [On Manichaean Sogdian writings, see Ch. 33.]

CHAPTER 32 (*c*)

MIDDLE PERSIAN INSCRIPTIONS

The small quantity of epigraphic material hitherto recovered in Pahlavi, that is, Sasanian Middle Persian, could easily be accommodated in a single publication. But none such as yet exists, the material still being either unpublished or published inadequately. Unquestionably the most important part of it is represented by the monumental inscriptions of the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries, with the addition of a small number of later inscriptions executed in a script known as cursive, some ostraca and papyri, and some important collections of seals, inscribed stones, and "bullae" or seal impressions on clay.

Few as they are, these documents constitute a remarkable inheritance; they represent the only strictly Iranian source of Sasanian history, inasmuch as the Graeco-Latin, Armenian or Syriac historical literature is foreign in origin, while the Arab-Persian authors, although they provided useful evidence by drawing on Sasanian writings of which nothing has survived, were much later in date than the events which they record; their perspective may have been open to question and their memory fallible. Thus there is good reason for regarding the Sasanian inscriptions as a cultural heritage of first importance. Moreover they are of especial interest on the linguistic level, for they provide the earliest examples of Sasanian Middle Persian, which otherwise, apart from the Manichaean documents of Turfān, occurs in quantity only in Mazdaean works, which gradually came to be written in a scholarly language at the last stage of its development, into which neologisms and persianisms were intruding. The fact that the inscriptions are bilingual or trilingual makes the study of them even more rewarding for the philologist. The connoisseur of *belles-lettres*, on the other hand, is likely to be disappointed, for the style of royal proclamations by official writers avoids neither rhetoric nor redundancies, and is often flat and devoid of all literary merit. Exceptions are the highly individual texts of Kirdīr and the great inscription of Shāpūr I, which may be reckoned among the finest examples of Iranian epigraphic material.

REVIEW OF STUDIES

From the 17th century onwards travellers had been recording the existence of inscriptions,[1] but the first decipherments were due to Silvestre de Sacy, who published them in his famous *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1787 to 1791. It was not, however, until the discovery of longer texts, notably the inscription of Ḥājjīābād, that real progress was made at the end of the 19th century in the understanding of epigraphic Pahlavī.[2] The most important inscriptions, of Sar Mashhad and the Ka'ba of Zoroaster, were not discovered until the period between the two wars (in 1924 and in 1936). There is always hope of further chance finds, which the additional inscriptions published by W. Hinz encourage one to entertain. In addition to the distinguished works of E. Herzfeld, M. Sprengling, A. Maricq, and H. S. Nyberg, W. B. Henning in particular produced numerous studies, especially on the inscriptions of Shāpūr and of Paikuli, and was responsible for three of the portfolios in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*.

CLASSIFICATION

The epigraphic material may be classified according to four criteria: the material utilized, the type of script employed, the dating, and the subject-matter of the inscription. Under the first heading the following will be studied in order: (a) lapidary inscriptions, (b) papyri, ostraca and silverware, (c) seals and bullae, with reference to relative chronology within each category.[3] Coins, being the special province of numismatists, will be excluded.

Under the second criterion, a very important one, two principal scripts must be distinguished: the lapidary or monumental, and the cursive one familiar from Book Pahlavi. But these definitions are ambiguous, since on seals and bullae both graphic systems, composed of 19 and 13 characters respectively, appear, while the cursive script was sometimes employed also on stone monuments. For precision it is more useful to differentiate between connected (cursive) and unconnected (lapidary) writing, for it is the use or absence of connecting strokes which constitutes the formal distinction between the two scripts. It was formerly believed that the cursive script, with its more limited alphabet,

[1] See Drouin in the bibliography.
[2] See the works of Haug, West, Thomas and Spiegel in the bibliography.
[3] For a strictly chronological classification, see Henning, "Mitteliranisch", pp. 46–52.

was derived from the lapidary, but the recent discovery at Istanbul of a funerary inscription in cursive script of quite early date (prior to 430) as well as of the Dura documents (see below, section 5), may if supported by further evidence of such early date, require a reconsideration of the question, as J. Harmatta has suggested.[1] Likewise those seals which are inscribed in cursive script are not necessarily of late date, in the absence so far of reliable means for dating them. The cursive script moreover, appears in a variety of forms, which are probably due not solely to the individuality of scribes. Monumental inscriptions in cursive script constitute, in fact, a separate class on grounds of subject-matter, since they are for the most part funerary, and employ a special script known as "vertical". Thus it is possible to draw a definitive distinction between two classes of inscriptions: (1) inscriptions, both royal and private, in lapidary or unconnected script and (2) tombstone or funerary inscriptions, in vertical cursive script. In addition there are various other types of inscriptions.

ROYAL INSCRIPTIONS

The earliest of these inscriptions, that of Ardashīr at Naqsh-i Rustam, mentions only the titles of the king. The majority of the others were executed on the instructions of Shāpūr I (240–72), to whom are due also the great inscription of the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht, as well as several short inscriptions.

(a) The Ka'ba inscription, which was discovered in 1936 by the American expedition of the Oriental Institute of Chicago, is the best known and the most studied on account of its historical importance. The breakthrough in its decipherment, identification and understanding was one of the great achievements of Henning's.[2] In time Sprengling published the Pahlavi, Parthian and Greek versions of the text, to be followed by the authoritative edition of the Greek version by Maricq. The present writer accepts Henning's view that only the Middle Persian version was a copy of the lost original, and that it was from it that the Parthian and the Greek versions were produced. However, the Middle Persian text, which is the least well preserved, allows of differences in interpretation to such an extent that a reconstruction based on the Greek

[1] "Byzantino-Iranica", *AAntASH* XVII (1969), pp. 257–8.

[2] Henning, "The Great Inscription of Šāpūr I". In the same year (1939) Henning sent to Bombay, for the *Jackson Memorial Volume*, his "Notes on the Great Inscription of Šāpūr I", but the volume, with that article on pp. 40–54, reached publication only in 1954. See M. Boyce and I. Gershevitch (eds.), *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume* (London, 1970), p. viii.

and on the Parthian is as valid as would be any restoration of the Middle Persian version itself.

The inscription is well conceived and balanced, and provides information of the highest value. After proclaiming his titles and his divine nature, Shāpūr enumerates the provinces of his empire. There follows a description of three victorious campaigns against Rome, in the course of which Gordian III was killed in 244, whereupon Philip the Arab was forced to buy peace. During the second campaign Shāpūr seized thirty-six towns in Syria, the names of which are given. Finally, in an attack on Carrhae and Edessa, Shāpūr demolished the Roman army, contingents of which came from twenty-nine different regions, and captured the Emperor Valerian. During this third campaign thirty-seven towns were conquered, all of which are listed. The second part of the inscription is devoted to the foundation of fire-temples which Shāpūr set up in the name of himself and his children and the endowments made to these fire-temples for the celebration of sacrifices for his own soul and the souls of other members, living and deceased, of the royal family. Thus there appear anew three lists of dignitaries: of the court of Pāpak, of Ardashīr and of Shāpūr himself. The inscription ends with a short passage in which Shāpūr advises all men to follow his example and serve the gods. The style is that of the driest accountancy, but the value of the inscription is immense, as was at once recognized by Henning, and later well expressed by A. Maricq:

> The inscription constitutes a first-class source of information with regard to several regions where many zones have remained in shadow – Middle Persian linguistics, the history of the Roman–Persian wars and of the administrative and religious institutions of Sassanian Iran, the historical geography of the Near East and of Iran as far as the frontiers of India.[1]

(b) Among the other inscriptions of Shāpūr, that found at Bīshāpūr commemorates the generosity of the king towards the scribe Afsā, who carved and inscribed his statue.[2] The inscription of Naqsh-i Rajab is no more than a simple list of titles, but that of Ḥājjīābād reveals the great interest taken in hunting and marksmanship, an interest which is confirmed by the new inscription of Tang-i Burāq, which in condensed form reproduces the text of Ḥājjīābād almost word for word.[3] The fact that the same text was carved in two places at such a distance from one

[1] *Classica et Orientalia*, p. 148.

[2] R. Ghirshman, "Inscription du monument de Châpour Ier à Châpour", *RAA* x (1936), pp. 123–9.

[3] G. Gropp, "Einige neuentdeckte Inschriften aus sasanidischer Zeit", in Hinz, *Altiranische Funde und Forschungen*, pp. 229–37.

another reveals a deliberate intention to preserve from the ravages of time a text which was regarded as important. Kirdīr was later to do the same with his own inscriptions. Such precautions appear to be typically Sasanian, for in sculpture also several copies were made of the reliefs both of the investiture of Ardashīr and of the triumph of Shāpūr.

(c) Bīshāpūr is the site of only a short inscription of Narseh, but at Paikuli E. Herzfeld had the good fortune to discover numerous scattered blocks bearing a long inscription of this ruler; it is likely, however, that thirty of the blocks which have remained unpublished and are now being prepared for publication by H. Humbach will necessitate a revision of the order of those blocks which Herzfeld had patiently worked out. It was Henning who recognized that the sole purpose of this text was to "tell us why and how Narseh ousted his great nephew Bahrām III[1] from the kingship". The inscription describes the journey of Narseh from Armenia to Babylonia where his supporters were awaiting him, and the oath of allegiance of the dignitaries who had come to meet him on the way, in the pass of Paikuli, where an inscribed monument would commemorate the event. It must therefore have occurred in the year 293–4, when Narseh came to power.

(d) The period which follows the great royal inscriptions of the 3rd century is illuminated only by short inscriptions. Shāpūr Sagānshāh was responsible for two brief texts discovered at Persepolis which date from the beginning of the 4th century.[2] The inscription recently found at Mishkīnshahr probably belongs to Shāpūr II,[3] and Shāpūr III caused a short text to be carved in the grotto of Ṭāq-i Bustān. The inscription describing the construction of a bridge at Fīrūzābād by Mihr-Narseh is the last of the royal inscriptions, belonging to the first half of the 5th century.[4]

THE PRIVATE INSCRIPTIONS OF KIRDĪR[5]

These constitute the most important group of the 3rd century. What makes them remarkable is that they were the work not of a king but of a religious leader, Kirdīr, the reformer and organizer of Zoroastrianism as state religion. Only his exceptional career, and the peculiar

[1] "A Farewell to the Khagan", p. 517.

[2] R. N. Frye, "The Persepolis Middle Persian inscriptions from the time of Shapur I", *AO* xxx (1966), pp. 83–93.

[3] G. Gropp, "Die sasanidische Inschrift von Mishkinshahr in Āzarbaidjān", *AMI* 1 (1968), pp. 149–57.

[4] Henning, "The Inscription of Firuzabad".

[5] This is the pronunciation of the name (spelt Kartir by scholars in general) which I recently proposed; see *La Persia nel Medioevo* (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rome, 1971), p. 538.

circumstances of his time, can explain his ability to have four texts carved on bas-reliefs of royal origin.

The best preserved of the four inscriptions which have come to light was, curiously enough, the last to be discovered, in 1936, carved below the great inscription of Shāpūr on the Ka'ba of Zoroaster. This inscription provided the basis for the decipherment of the two great texts of Naqsh-i Rustam and Sar Mashhad, which could not be interpreted with any conviction until Henning's publication of the latex squeezes he had made of it, in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*. The inscriptions consist, with some variation, of identical texts, but the Ka'ba text was not the original. Moreover, it is necessary to distinguish two separate texts:

One is repeated three times: on the Ka'ba, at Naqsh-i Rustam and at Sar Mashhad; it is a description of the fascinating career of Kirdīr. During a life spent under seven successive kings he rose from being a simple *hērbed* in the reign of Shāpūr I, to the office of "wise man (*magupat*) of Ohrmazd" under Ohrmazd I, to be finally designated by Bahrām II as "wise man and judge of the whole empire" and "master of the temple of Anāhīt at Stakhr", which titles conferred upon him supreme power in matters of religion. It is probable that Kirdīr influenced even dynastic succession, by making sure that Bahrām III, and not Narseh, succeeded his father. In this text Kirdīr also repeatedly lays emphasis on his acts as a reformer: he persecuted foreign religions (the part he played in the condemnation of Mānī is well known) and such Zoroastrians as were deemed to be heterodox (that is to say, the Magusians in the West), in order to re-establish Mazdaism in all its purity. To this end he developed the foundation of fire-temples, the recruitment of numerous magi and the celebration of cult services.

The second text is in quite a different vein, being concerned with eschatological questions. As the earliest document of its kind in Pahlavi literature, it is of the greatest importance. Although repeated both at Naqsh-i Rustam and at Sar Mashhad it is unfortunately too badly mutilated for the sense to be easily apparent. Nevertheless it is clear that Kirdīr describes a vision of the Beyond which the gods have granted to him and sets forth his doctrines on heaven and hell, justifying at the same time the religious measures he had taken.

The short inscription at Naqsh-i Rajab lends itself to interpretation in the same way, and appears to provide a summary of all that Kirdīr had expressed elsewhere.

As a result of a critical study of the textual variants,[1] after the publication of Sar Mashhad[2] and of Naqsh-i Rustam,[3] the following conclusions may be formulated, based equally on the historical context and the archaeological data:

(1) Sar Mashhad is most probably the original text, executed towards the end of the reign of Bahrām II (290–3), above the relief which the great king had caused to be carved.

(2) The three other inscriptions appear on reliefs which had already been used by Sasanian kings. But it is hard to imagine that Bahrām II would have authorized Kirdīr to inscribe royal bas-reliefs. For this reason and in view of the textual variants it may be argued that Kirdīr had these inscriptions carved during the troubled period in which, only three months after his accession to the throne, the young Bahrām III was ousted by Narseh. It is therefore necessary to ascribe them to *c.* 293, which is a little later than the date proposed by W. Hinz, in the following order:

(a) The inscription at Naqsh-i Rajab may have been intended to provide a summary of the great inscription in a more accessible place than Sar Mashhad. Thanks to its colophon (there must have been one also at Sar Mashhad) it is known to have been carved by a scribe of Kirdīr's.

(b) The inscription of the Ka'ba is a copy of the one at Sar Mashhad, somewhat modified. In order to justify its location, Kirdīr declared that Shāpūr had consigned to him the tower of the Ka'ba. This cannot possibly be true, since the king had converted this Achaemenian building into a kind of memorial to his own victories and his religious foundations, and in any case Kirdīr would hardly have waited fifty years before setting his mark on so prestigious a possession.

(c) Naqsh-i Rustam provides the last of the texts, recopied from that of the Ka'ba, the defects of which can be corrected with the help of the more faithful version at Sar Mashhad.

THE DOCUMENTS OF DURA-EUROPOS

These inscriptions have been collated in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* by R. N. Frye. From their early date (middle of the 3rd century) as well as from their script (lapidary, with a slight tendency for letters to be connected), they must be included among the private inscriptions, though they are solely concerned with the history of Dura. However, they constitute the earliest evidence of Pahlavi writing in manuscript and thus serve to strengthen the evidence that the script

[1] P. Gignoux, "Études des variantes textuelles des inscriptions de Kirdir", *Le Muséon* LXXXVI (1973), pp. 193–216.

[2] Gignoux, "L'inscription de Kartir à Sar Mašhad".

[3] Gignoux, "L'inscription de Kirdīr à Naqš-i Rustam".

known as *cursive* was not simply produced by evolution from the lapidary script.

FUNERARY INSCRIPTIONS IN CURSIVE SCRIPT

The extent of the area over which cursive Pahlavi was used on tombstones may be judged from the inscriptions recently discovered which are as far removed from one another as Istanbul in the West (5th century, already the subject of several publications), Siam in the East (9th century, with a Chinese translation) and Darband in the North, where inscriptions of the 6th century were found. Fārs, as might be expected, is also well represented by the four inscriptions of Stakhr and by that of Iqlīd,[1] by the fragments found at Bīshāpūr,[2] and by the column of Bāgh-i Lardī.[3] On the whole these inscriptions are late in date, from the end of the Sasanian era. They apprise us only of the identity of the deceased, sometimes with expression of grief and often with a religious formula. In conclusion it remains to note the later tomb-inscriptions of the 9th–11th centuries found on the one hand in Māzandarān, on the other in India, such as the Christian crosses of Travancore and of the Mount St Thomas in Madras.

Separate mention must be made of two inscriptions found at Maqṣūdābād[4] and the three inscriptions of Tang-i Khōshk,[5] which are important on account of their contents. The former contain particulars of properties and certify the authenticity of an estate; the second group are concerned with the assignment of a property and give an inventory of its various components – irrigation canals, gardens, orchards, vines, woods and houses. These latter texts confirm that the cursive script was not used solely for funerary purposes.

PAPYRI, OSTRACA AND SILVERWARE

Pahlavi papyri, dating from the Persian occupation of Egypt in 619 and now dispersed throughout the libraries of Europe and America, have been the subject of several publications. In 1938 O. Hansen published the Berlin collection. Father de Menasce examined the Basle papyrus, which is of interest for its place-names transcribed from Greek.[6] The

[1] Gropp, "Einige neuentdeckte Inschriften", pp. 237–42; R. N. Frye, "Funerary inscriptions in Pahlavi from Fars", in *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume*, pp. 152–6.

[2] J. de Menasce, "Inscriptions pehlevies en écriture cursive", *JA* 1956, pp. 423–31.

[3] Sprengling, pp. 70–1, pl. 28; Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 48.

[4] De Menasce, *op. cit.*

[5] Gropp, *op. cit.*, pp. 242–55.

[6] J. de Menasce, "Recherches de papyrologie pehlevie", *JA* 1953, pp. 185–96.

same author published the papyri of Philadelphia, Brooklyn, the Louvre, Strasburg, Basle and Oxford,[1] while the collections of Vienna and Heidelberg are due to be examined in the *Corpus* by D. Weber. Papyri, however, continue to be very difficult to decipher and to interpret.

The ostraca discovered near Rayy by Herzfeld and acquired by the British Museum were published by J. de Menasce in the *Corpus* at the same time as the papyri, together with several preserved in New York and in Tehran. Among the documents of Dura-Europos, mention should be made of an ostracon containing a list of names of officers and of crafts.[2]

Finally, there are some pieces of inscribed silverware bearing only an assessment of the weight and the name of the owner. An inscription in Middle Persian was discovered by J. Harmatta on the celebrated gold cup of Khusrau in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris.

SEALS AND BULLAE

The public and private collections of Sasanian seals and bullae have only recently begun to resume the place they deserve in learned publications, after the studies, obsolete by now, of P. Horn and A. Mordtmann at the end of the 19th century. Two systematic catalogues have appeared: the one produced by Borisov and Lukonin in 1963 reviews 800 seals of the Hermitage Museum; that of A. D. H. Bivar deals with nearly 800 objects in the British Museum which were published in the *Corpus*.[3] The catalogue of the Paris collections has appeared, while that of the Berlin collections which had previously been studied by the 19th-century authorities named above, is in preparation. Among private collections, that of M. Foroughi was published in the *Corpus* by R. N. Frye, who had already described the bullae from it,[4] and has recently published the Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr collection of bullae. Another important collection of bullae has been discovered at Takht-i Sulaimān and published by R. Göbl.

Both major types of script described above are to be found on these objects, which in addition display a very great variety of graphisms. These are probably due partly to the individuality of craftsmen who often had to use very small surfaces compelling them sometimes even to

[1] *CIIr* Part III, vol. V (1957).

[2] M. Harmatta-Pékáry, "The decipherment of the Pārsīk ostracon from Dura-Europos", in *La Persia nel Medioevo*, pp. 467–75.

[3] A. D. H. Bivar, *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic seals in the British Museum. Stamp seals* II: *The Sassanian Dynasty*, London, 1969; *CIIr*, Part III, vol. VI, portfolio I (1968).

[4] *CIIr*, Part III, vol. VI, portfolio II (1971); "Sasanian clay sealings in the collection of Mohsen Foroughi", *IA* VII (1968), pp. 118–32.

abbreviate, and partly to the stylization inherent in this art. An exhaustive study of these scripts has yet to be made.

The dating of seals constitutes a further difficult problem. Neither the script nor the typology provides sufficient criteria, and there is not usually any known connection with a datable archaeological site. They have in fact seldom reached us from sites, but were passed from hand to hand until they turned up in bazaars, where collectors acquired them. Even the global method extolled by V. G. Lukonin, who combines comparative palaeography, on the one hand, with the association of the elements of iconography with those of coins and bas-reliefs on the other, does not always give very convincing results. A. D. H. Bivar, in the excellent introduction to his *Catalogue*, is much more cautious, and describes his attempts to assign a date to each object as nothing more than the "result of a first impression".[1]

To the historian of Sasanian Iran, seals and bullae are of considerable interest.[2] In spite of their laconic phrasing, these objects provide a quantity of proper names, place-names and titles. Many of the seals belonged to officials, dignitaries and clergy, and some of them give titles which were hitherto unknown and are difficult to interpret; others contain religious formulae or prayers which are not necessarily stereotyped. The figurations are also important and should be of great assistance in interpreting the religious symbolism of the Sasanian period, which needs to be studied as a whole, after the perpetration of certain errors which have been denounced by J. Duchesne-Guillemin.[3]

THE LANGUAGE OF THE INSCRIPTIONS

From what has gone before, the historical importance of epigraphic documents will be apparent. Their linguistic aspect, however, has been only implied and it is no less significant. The inscriptions as a whole represent a vocabulary of about 1,500 words, of which ideograms amount to some 40 per cent.[4] The ideographical system seems somewhat different from that of Book Pahlavi, especially with regard to the use of phonetic complements. It is reasonable to suppose that light will be thrown on Book Pahlavi from the elucidation of this system; with the aid of inscriptions, moreover, it becomes possible to assess the

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 16.
[2] J. Harmatta, "Die sassanidische Siegelinschriften als geschichtliche Quellen", *AAntASH* XII (1964), pp. 217–30. See also pp. 742ff.
[3] "Art et Religion sous les Sassanides", *La Persia nel Medioevo*, pp. 377–88.
[4] The proportion in Book Pahlavi seems to be almost identical.

deliberate archaisms of late Pahlavi.[1] Inscriptions, being the sole surviving witness of early Pahlavi, must provide the basis for any attempt at synthesis, and their language, as a kind of microcosm, makes a convenient starting-point for a study of Pahlavi syntax, at least in its broad outlines.

[1] Compare, for example, inscriptional *dyhpty* with Book Pahlavi *dhywpt'* ("ruler"), which shows a return to the past, to the language of the Avesta.

CHAPTER 33

SOGDIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

I. INTRODUCTION

The oldest known references to the region of Sogdiana occur in the Old Persian inscriptions and in the (Younger) Avesta. In the former, Sogdiana (*sug^{u}da*) is mentioned as a satrapy of the Achaemenian empire, listed between Bactria and Khwarazmia or between Bactria and Gandhāra. In a building inscription at Susa, lapis lazuli (*kāsaka haya kapautaka* "blue '*kāsaka*'") and carnelian (*sinkabruš*) are said to have been brought from Sogdiana for the construction of the palace. In the Avesta the Sogdian area is referred to as *suxδa-* in a list of lands, between Margu/Marv and Khwarazm (*x^{w}āirizəm*); as *suγδa-* the area is said to be the second best, after *airyanəm waējō* "the Aryan 'range'" and before Margu/Marv, of the territories created by Ahura Mazdā and to have been visited by the Ahrimanic plague known as *skaiti-*, a term which seems to mean rather "thorn, weed" than "locust" as the Pahlavī translation (*kullag* "locust") has it. Although these data provide only rough geographical delimitations, they establish Sogdiana as the areas around the cities of Bukhārā and Samarkand including part of the Farghāna valley.

As subjects of the Achaemenid rulers, the Sogdians (Σογδιανοί or Σόγδοι) became known to the Greek world; a Sogdian contingent under the command of Azanes, son of Artaios, formed part of the Persian army which attacked and invaded Greece under Xerxes in 480 B.C. A century and a half later, resistance to Alexander the Great became apparent, in 329–8 B.C., in an unsuccessful offensive mounted by the Sogdians under the leadership of Spitamenes against the Macedonian garrison in the city of Maracanda/Samarkand. Alexander's campaigns in Sogdiana and other eastern Iranian areas, in particular the destruction of Maracanda itself, ultimately resulted in a forced migratory movement of the Sogdians in an easterly direction, a diaspora as it were, which was also further stimulated by the activities of Sogdian businessmen and merchants in trade with the Chinese settlements in the province of Sinkiang.

While Sogdiana seems to have remained on the periphery of Parthian politics and interests, numismatic evidence shows that it was part of the Sasanian empire, under royal governors, for about one century after A.D. 260. Inscriptional evidence from the time of Shāpūr I (239–70) provides a much quoted reference to Sogdiana as the land which delimits the northeastern extent of the Kushān empire. In Middle Iranian sources the ethnicon "Sogdian" occurs as *sūlīg* or *sūlag* in Pahlavī, as *swylyy* (*suγδī*) in Manichaean Middle Persian, as *swgd*(*suγd*) in Parthian (in Shāpūr's inscription at the Ka'ba-yi Zardusht), and as *swγδ-* (*suγδ-*) and *syγwδ-* (*s^{u}γuδ-*) in Sogdian itself.

With the ascendancy of Islam in the Iranian world in the 7th and 8th centuries attempts began to be made to bring Sogdiana and its neighbouring lands into the Muslim orbit. After several unsuccessful efforts by the Arab armies to gain permanent control of Transoxiana, Quṭaiba b. Muslim accomplished the annexation of the Bukhārā–Samarkand–Tashkent area in the first decade of the 8th century. After his death in A.D. 715, Arab control over Transoxiana was partly lost again and local principalities began to emerge. The final blow to the very existence and survival of the Sogdian people and its language was delivered by the emergence of Mongol power under Chingiz-Khān and its forceful expansion in a westerly direction in the early 13th century. The only still remaining descendant of the Sogdian language is Yaghnōbī, spoken in the valley of the Yaghnāb river, north of the Pamir mountains.

This brief historical sketch is intended to assist in the determination of the chronological location of the various kinds of documents written in Sogdian which have been preserved.

II. LANGUAGE

Until the discoveries, in the beginning of this century, of writing in (Middle) Iranian languages at Turfan in Chinese Turkestan, only a few scraps of evidence of the Sogdian language were known.[1] The identity of Sogdian among the Turfan materials was first suspected and then established by F. C. Andreas (1846–1930). Glimpses of his rare linguistic insight appear in the early publications of Turfan materials by F. W. K. Müller; one such early proof of Andreas' discovery appears in a passage which deserves quotation:[2] "According to an oral com-

[1] See Lentz, "Fünfzig Jahre Arbeit" and Boyce, *Catalogue*.
[2] Müller, "Uigurica I", p. 3.

munication of Andreas the determination of the language is based on two specifically Sogdian characteristics which emerge from a careful consideration of the Sogdian materials in Bīrūnī: the regular development of Old Iranian *θr* into *š* (or *xš*) and of *h* into *x*." Strong support, Müller adds, for the correctness of Andreas' identification is provided by "the agreement between the names of the Sogdian months as given by Bīrūnī and those found in the Manichaean Sogdian fragments". The names of each month and also the days of each month in the Sogdian year can now be reconstructed from the forms which occur in the Mugh documents.[1]

The surviving documents show that depending on the time, place and purpose of composition several types of scripts were used for the notation of Sogdian. Three main types can be distinguished each of which originated in one or another variety of the Semitic–Aramaic alphabet which is at the basis of most pre-Islamic Iranian writing systems. The first type was used for documentary materials of a non-literary nature (see below III. 4) and for Buddhist texts (see below III. 1). It is commonly referred to as the Samarqand type; it had become the generally used Sogdian script by the 4th century A.D. and became fully developed by A.D. 700; according to the Chinese traveller Hsüan-tsang, who visited Central Asia in A.D. 630, the Sogdians had an alphabet consisting of "more than twenty" or "twenty-odd signs"; it continued to be used for Buddhist texts for the next one or two centuries, and was adopted for the writing of Old Turkish (Uighur) texts. The second type represents a variety of the (Semitic) Palmyrene script as originally adapted by Mānī and later used for the writing of Manichaean texts in Sogdian as well as in Middle Persian, Parthian, New Persian, Kuchean and Uighur. The third type, based on the Syriac Estrangelo script, was used for the writing of texts of Christian content (see below III. 3). Variations of these three principal scripts were in use at different times and places. A historical comparative study of the various Sogdian script systems does not yet exist; such a study is, of course, a precondition for the understanding of their historical development and its historical implications.[2] Recently, a Sogdian alphabet,

[1] See below III. 4 and pages 814f. The forms from Bīrūnī (*Chronology*, pp. 56–7, 82) are written in the Arabic, the Manichaean in the Manichaean, and the Mugh forms in the Samarkand script; see Henning, "Zum soghdischen Kalender", and "The Manichaean feasts"; Freiman, *Sogdijskie dokumenty* I, pp. 27–42.

[2] See R. Gauthiot, "De l'alphabet sogdien", *JA* 1911, pp. 81–95 and *JA* 1913, pp. 522–33; Henning, "Mitteliranisch", pp. 52–6; Sims-Williams, "Notes on Sogdian palaeography".

written on a shard, originating in Panjikant and probably dating from the end of the 7th or the first half of the 8th century was published;[1] as an example of a local variety it is reproduced below.

6	5	4	3	2	1
w	*h*	*d*	*γ*	*β*	ʾ
12	11	10	9	8	7
δ (*l*)	*k*	*y*	*ṭ*	*x* (*ḥ*)	*z*
18	17	16	15	14	13
c (*ṣ*)	*s*	ʿ	*s*	*n*	*m*
	23	22	21	20	19
	l (/*θ*/?)	*t*	*š*	*r*	*q*

Political reasons and economic insecurity following official displeasure, first in Sasanian times and then under Islamic rule, drove the Manichaean communities to leave their Iranian homeland and settle along the Central Asian oasis roads; the strong expansion of the Nestorian Christian Church of Persia brought followers of that religion to the same cities and towns. Both religions encountered representatives of Indian Buddhism which had carried their religion to Central Asia. All three religions established institutions of religious learning and places of worship and engaged in activities which included translation from their original Iranian, Syriac, Indic and Chinese tongues into Sogdian. The rôle of that language as used for commercial and administrative purposes over a period of some 600 years from the 4th to the 10th centuries has been compared, quite appropriately, to that of a *lingua franca*.[2]

Between the language of the Buddhist, Manichaean and Christian materials linguistic differences have been observed and the question of the existence of three genuine Sogdian dialects has been raised; it has been suggested that these differences may be accounted for by

[1] Livshitz, "A Sogdian alphabet".

[2] The designation was used by P. Pelliot, "Les influences iraniennes en Asie Centrale et en Extrême-Orient", *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuses*, n.s. III (Paris, 1912), p. 105.

actual phonological and morphological differentiations, the use of different writing systems, the adoption of differing orthographic conventions and styles in the scribal and literary traditions established by each of the three religious communities, variations in the social, economic and educational background and status between these communities, and chronological variables.[1] The relevant evidence has to be studied further, in terms of a more precise analysis especially of the grammar of the Buddhist and Christian texts, before a decision can be reached as to which explanation or combination of explanations best fits the available data.

Like other eastern Iranian languages, such as Khwarazmian and Khotanese, Sogdian shows the preservation of a highly developed nominal, pronominal and verbal system which retains, for instance, many different sets of special forms of tenses (present, imperfect, preterites, duratives, future) and moods (imperative, subjunctive, optative), a feature which in general distinguishes the eastern from the western Iranian languages with their sharply reduced morphology. A prevailing trait, which seems to have controlled, at least to a degree, the preservation or loss of vocalic endings in Sogdian morphology and was possibly a consequence of word stress, is what has been labelled the "rhythmic law".[2]

As for the position of Sogdian among other Iranian languages several observations have been made.[3] Two of those deserve to be singled out: first, Sogdian shares certain features with Old Persian: (a) Old Iranian **θr-* appears as a sibilant in both Old Persian and Sogdian (OP *çitiya-*, Manichaean Sogdian *štyk* "third"; OP **miça-*, Manichaean Sogdian *myš-* "Miθra"); (b) certain combinations of prepositions and pronouns are common to both OP and Sogdian (OP *hačāma*, Sogdian *c'm'* [*čāmă*] "from me"); (c) the lexicographical correspondence between OP *gaub-* "to speak" and Sogdian *γwβ-* (*γōv-*) "to praise", to be compared with Khwarazmian *γwβ(y)-* (from **gaubaya-*) "to boast" and *γwy-* (if from **gubya-*) "to praise". Henning tentatively proposed that the Persians in ancient times may have resided for some time in an area adjacent to ancient Sogdiana. Secondly, Sogdian shows the occurrence of a short *a*, from **ā*, under certain conditions just like Avestan; for instance: before *y* (Avestan *zaya-* and Manichaean Sogdian *''jy-* (*āzay-*), as against New Persian *zāy-*,

[1] Henning, "Mitteliranisch", pp. 105–8.

[2] P. Tedesco, *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik* IV (1926), p. 102; later reformulated by Gershevitch, "Grammar", p. 72. For the impact of stress see I. Gershevitch, "Iranian notes", *TPS* 1948, pp. 61–3.

[3] Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 108.

Sanskrit *jāy-* "to be born"; Avestan *a-saya-*, Manichaean Sogdian *sy'k*, Buddhist Sogdian *sy''kh*, Christian Sogdian *sy'q* (*sayāk*), as against New Persian *sāya*, Sanskrit *chāyā-* "shadow"), and before *w*(*ā*) (Avestan *nawāza-*, Sogdian *nw''z* (*nawāz*), as against Manichaean Parthian *n'w'z* (*nāwāz*), Snskrit *nāvāja-* "sailor").[1] These identical developments have been taken as one of the reasons for assuming that Avestan belongs to the eastern Iranian language group.

III. LITERATURE

The following survey, which is not intended to be complete, will deal with the existing Sogdian materials in this order: 1. Buddhist, 2. Manichaean, 3. Christian, and 4. non-religious writing. The religious texts can be assigned with some certainty to the period between the 8th and 11th centuries. They originate in the Sogdian settlements in the Turfan oasis and in Tun-huang, southeast of Turfan, and show the presence of religious pluralism in those communities in that period.

In evaluating the religious literature it should be realized at the outset that it owes its existence to translation by Buddhist, Manichaean and Christian religious literati. This not only explains its lack of originality, but is also responsible for certain features inherent in rendering any text from one language into another. However knowledgeable, experienced and inventive the translator, traces of his struggle with problems of language, style and technical terminology will be apparent in his handiwork; his translation can neither entirely nor freely reflect the idiomatic flavour and texture of an original composition. The complex and technical nature of the Buddhist, Manichaean and Christian systems of thought as expressed in the texts used for translation into Sogdian has clearly put the translator's competence to a severe test. In some cases it has forced him to strain and twist the natural expressive potential of the Sogdian language; it has caused him to invent *ad hoc* technical terms,[2] and made him stay too close to the idiom of the original, and finally it has led him to misunderstanding or misinterpretation. All of this has to be kept in mind constantly when making a grammatical analysis or literary evaluation of Sogdian literature.

1. Proof of the vigorous and extensive translation activities in the Buddhist monasteries in Central Asia is the rather large number of

[1] W. B. Henning, "The disintegration of the Avestic studies", *TPS* 1942, p. 50.
[2] MacKenzie, "Buddhist terminology".

often fragmentary Sogdian texts in the traditional Indian *sūtra* style of teaching, supposedly by the Buddha himself, of the tenets of Buddhist lore according to the *Mahāyāna* or "Great Vehicle" school, which was particularly popular in Central Asia. Taken together, however, the Sogdian Buddhist texts represent only a fraction of the sum total of *Mahāyāna*-school literature as known from non-Iranian sources. Although most of the underlying original Indian texts (or Chinese as the case may be) have been determined, it has not yet been possible to establish the identity of all of them. Given the origin, nature and composition of these treatises it is almost impossible to sketch their contents without lengthy technical annotations; the framework of this survey only allows for a few notes in each case. Among the texts which have been identified are:

'krtyh 'nβ'nt ptwry pwstk "Sūtra of the cause[s and] effects of action[s]", one of the longer texts, based on a Chinese version, in which the Buddha lists the retributions given to individuals in their future existences for acts done in earlier ones.[1]

Amoghapāśahṛdayasūtra (*''m'kp'š δry'ẓwr* "Amoghapāśa-heart") in a version resembling the Chinese rendering by Bodhiruci of A.D. 693, a portion of which exists also in Khotanese.[2]

Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabhātathāgatasūtra (*'rwr'n mwck' ''pkyn'y 'rδ'yp'k . . . m'yδ''γtk*) is the literal translation of *bhaiṣajya-guru-vaiḍūrya-prabhā . . . tathāgata*, translated from the Chinese; several Khotanese fragments are known.[3]

Buddhadhyānasamādhisāgarasūtra, a long fragment, originally published as "Dhyāna-Text", which was identified by the discovery of a Chinese parallel text.[4]

Dīrghanakhasūtra (*βrẓ ny'n . . . δynδ'ry wpr's pwstk*) "Sūtra of the question[s] of the religious Long-Nailed ones", a complete text, of which a Chinese version is known.[5]

The so-called "Dhuta" text which deals with the concept of Sanskrit *dhuta* "pure [of sin], purification", the full title of which is possibly *δwt' RBk prβ''r pwstk* or **Dhutamahāyānasūtra*.[6]

Laṅkāvatārasūtra (*rnk' pwstk kβny wyδβ'γ ZK ẓwtk ZY 'βẓny 't kβrδh pcyw'y*)

[1] See bibliography under Gauthiot (and Pelliot) and MacKenzie.

[2] Benveniste, *Textes*, pp. 93–104. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 82–92.

[4] Reichelt I, pp. 33–56. On this text see Benveniste, "Notes sur le fragment sogdien du *Buddhadhyānasamādhisāgarasūtra*", and "Notes sur les textes sogdiens", pp. 43–8; F. Weller, "Bemerkungen zum soghdischen Dhyāna-Texte", *Monumenta Serica* II (Peiping, 1936), pp. 341–404 and III (1938), pp. 78–129.

[5] Benveniste, *Textes*, pp. 74–81. The first 88 lines were originally published by R. Gauthiot, "Le sūtra des religieux Ongles-Longs", *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique de Paris* XVII (1912), pp. 1–11 and commented upon by F. Weller, "Bemerkungen zum soghdischen Dīrghanakhasūtra", *Asia Major* X (1935), pp. 221–8. The remainder (lines 89–125) are in the style of a confession of sins, see Henning, "Sogdian texts of Paris", p. 730.

[6] Reichelt I, pp. 15–32. See Benveniste, "Notes sur les textes sogdiens", pp. 33–44.

"Laṅkāsūtra, short explanation of the prohibition of alcohol, garlic [and] onion[s]", a text which is incompletely dated ("written in the city of Xumdān [Si-ngan-fou] . . . the 28th of the 3rd month") and is part of a long text on dietary restrictions.[1]

Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra (*mz'yx prn nyrβ'n pwstk*), extant in two fragments, based on the Chinese, the longer of which is a discussion of the Buddha with the Bodhisattva Kāśyapa on the four kinds of acts [*karman*] and their results.[2]

-mstk'r cs'nt prywn pwstk "Sūtra on the interdiction of intoxicating beverages".[3]

Padmacintāmaṇidhāraṇīsūtra, partly incomplete fragment, based on a Chinese version made in Khotan in the end of the 7th century, of the Indian *dhāranī* ["incantation"] genre.[4]

Suvarṇabhāsasūtra, short fragment with Chinese and Uighur parallel versions of a discussion on the nature of *dharmadhātu* "sphere [of religion], space, absolute" from a popular text of which also Khotanese fragments are extant.[5]

Vajracchedikā, known in two fragments, the second of which is the end of the text, as it appears from the traditional formula *rty δrm ky np'ys't ptβs't sywn't ZY pr 'šy' w'β't s't 'yw my'wn pwt'ny βr'y βyr'nt* "who [ever] writes, reads, recites and memorizes the [Buddhist] *dharma*, all [of those], completely, may they attain the fruit of the Buddha", of a text, also known in Khotanese, of the Indian *prajñāpāramitā* ["supreme knowledge"] genre.[6]

Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra (*βymyrkr'yt*, *βymrkytr* for Vimalakīrti), a fragment, based on a Chinese parallel version, of one of the more direct and lively *Mahāyāna* treatises of which Khotanese fragments are known.[7]

Other popular genres of Buddhist literature are less well represented in Sogdian. Among them are the *Avalokiteśvarasyanāmāṣṭaśatakasūtra* (*''ry'βr'wkδyšβr* . . . 100 *'št n'm swtr* "Sūtra of the 108 names of Āryāvalokiteśvara [a renowned bodhisattva]".[8] By a stroke of good luck the *Vessantarajātaka*, the longest text known in Sogdian and possibly the most beloved representative of the Buddhist *jātaka* ("rebirth [of the Buddha]") tales, has survived almost in its entirety. It tells the story of the boundless generosity in giving gifts of (the Buddha as) prince Sudāśan who is known in Pali as Vessantara. In addition to versions in Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, Tocharian and Chinese a short reference to the story is found in Khotanese.[9] From this tabulation it will appear that the Buddhist Sogdian materials, with few exceptions, have

[1] Benveniste, *Textes*, pp. 29–43. [2] Müller and Lentz II, pp. 550–5 and 556.

[3] Reichelt II, pp. 67–70. See Benveniste, "Notes sur les textes sogdiens", pp. 58–61.

[4] F. W. K. Müller, "Reste einer soghdischen Übersetzung des Padmacintāmanidhāraṇī-sūtra", *SPAW* 1926, pp. 2–8. [5] Müller and Lentz II, pp. 539–44.

[6] Reichelt II, pp. 71–5 and Müller and Lentz II, pp. 544–8. See F. Weller, "Bemerkungen zur soghdischen Vajracchedikā", *AO* XIV (1936), pp. 112–46 and Benveniste, "Notes sur les textes sogdiens", pp. 61–6.

[7] Reichelt, pp. 1–13. See F. Weller, "Bemerkungen zum soghdischen Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra". *Asia Major* X (1935), pp. 314–64 and "Zum soghdischen Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra, *AKM* XXII (1937), pp. 1–87 and Benveniste, "Notes sur les textes sogdiens", pp. 29–33. [8] Benveniste, *Textes*, pp. 105–17 and perhaps Reichelt II, p. 78.

[9] I. Gershevitch, "On the Sogdian Vessantara Jātaka", *JRAS* 1942, pp. 97–101.

little purely literary value. They are relevant for purposes of comparison with, and to some extent the reconstruction of, parallel texts in languages other than Sogdian. The linguistic information they contain has been and is invaluable for historical and comparative study of the grammar and vocabulary of the Iranian language group.

2. In terms of conservation, Manichaean literature in Sogdian is of a highly fragmentary character. In fact, no complete text of what at one time must have been a rich literature has survived. The hardships of military and political upheavals, the wear and tear of time, the inclemency of weather conditions and the voracity of insects have given short shrift to the minute and devotional care which the Manichaean scribes dispensed on the writing, illumination, collection and preservation of their religious books. Little or nothing has survived in Sogdian of six of the seven canonical works, written originally by Mānī himself in his native language and known as the "[Great or Living] Gospel-Evangelium", the "Treasure of Life", the "Pragmateia" (or "Treatise"), the "Book of Secrets", the "Epistles" or the "Tradition". Only a collection of fragments, some of which are in Sogdian, has been preserved of the "Book of the Giants", the seventh canonical work, in which Mānī described his understanding and interpretation of the tale of the fallen angels and their defeat at the hands of the four archangels.[1] In addition, brief passages in Sogdian of the "Epistles" are known and Sogdian fragments of a work known in Parthian as *Wuzurgān Āfrīwan* ("Blessing of the Great Ones") and of the *Kephalaia*, addresses by Mānī collected after his death, have been recognized.

The same fragmentation applies to the secondary non-canonical and not strictly religious Manichaean literature, which moreover is as yet partly unpublished. The limitations of this survey, again, do not allow a detailed listing or description of the many small and larger fragments which have been identified and published.[2] To the religious texts belong fragments which are part of a work known as the "Explanation of the Soul" (Parthian *gyān wifrās*); fragments of hymn-cycles, a well-known and popular genre of Manichaean literature; a substantial passage for use by the Manichaean *electi*[3] and two shorter fragments

[1] W. B. Henning, "The Book of the Giants", *BSOAS* XI (1943), pp. 52–74.

[2] There are only few Sogdian fragments in the two publications by E. Waldschmidt and W. Lentz, "Die Stellung Jesu im Manichäismus", *APAW* 1926 and "Manichäische Dogmatik aus chinesischen und iranischen Texten", *SPAW* 1933. A glossary of the Sogdian words in them was compiled by G. Gropp in R. N. Frye (ed.), *Neue Methodologie in der Iranistik* (Wiesbaden, 1974), pp. 35–44.

[3] W. B. Henning, "Ein manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch", *SPAW* 1936, with glossary.

for the *auditores*[1] of a confessional (*xwāstwānīft* "confession");[2] a fragment in which the "calumniators and sinners (against the Manichaean religion)" are enumerated, and in which the crime of murdering the Magi (Sogdian *mwγzt-*, Greek *magophónia*) is attributed to Alexander the Great;[3] a fragment of the Manichaean concept of the story of the world;[4] religious calendar-tables.[5]

Non-religious, yet Manichaean-inspired materials include parable-style stories the themes of some of which, such as the "Pearlborer" and "The three fishes", are known from the Arabic *Kalīla wa Dimna* or the Indian *Pañčatantra* collections of fables and stories; they show the intermediary role of the Manichaeans in the transmission of story materials between east and west.[6] Materials which seem to have served primarily educational and instructional purposes include glossaries of Western Iranian and Sogdian words in parallel columns, lists of personal names, male and female, a list of parts of the head (eyelash, eyeball, ear, ear-hole, (lower) face, mouth, gums, lip, tooth, saliva, tongue, root of the tongue, palate), and a list of nations (*nāfnāmag*).[7]

In contrast to the Buddhist texts, the Manichaean materials, in more than one instance, show the vivid and colourful imagination which was ultimately inspired by Mānī himself; they are precious as a primary source in combination with other Iranian sources such as texts in Middle Persian and Parthian – and non-Iranian sources as well – for the reconstruction and comprehension of the intricate and often abstruse points and details of Manichaean philosophy, and, of course, they provide uniquely valuable linguistic information.

3. Christian writings in Sogdian attest to the successful activities of Nestorian Christian missionaries in Central Asia. The earliest translations of Christian texts into Sogdian date from the period after emigration of Nestorians from Iran to Central Asia began during the reign of the Sasanian king Yazdgard II (438–57). A late redaction of some of them has been assumed on the ground of the occurrence of such expressions as *mwγ'nc dyn* "the Magian (Zoroastrian) religion" and the uncertain *z[m]zm' wnt'* "he did *zamzama* (the murmured tone of reciting certain Zoroastrian prayers)".[8] The argument does not hold, but it must be admitted that generally speaking the dating of the

[1] Henning, *Sogdica*, pp. 63–7.
[2] See J. P. Asmussen, *Xᵘāstvānīft, Studies in Manichaeism* (Copenhagen, 1965).
[3] W. B. Henning, "The murder of the Magi", *JRAS* 1944, pp. 133–44.
[4] W. B. Henning, "A Sogdian fragment of the Manichaean cosmogony", *BSOAS* XII (1948), pp. 306–18.
[5] Henning, "The Manichaean feasts", pp. 146–64.
[6] Henning, "Sogdian tales".
[7] Henning, *Sogdica*, pp. 2–11.
[8] Benveniste, "Études II", p. 116.

Sogdian translations remains uncertain. The relationship between them and their originals or parallel versions in Syriac and, sometimes, Greek is similar to that of the Buddhist Sogdian texts and their Indian or Chinese originals. As a result, their interpretation depends to a large degree on the identification of the Syriac texts from which they were translated.

Since most of the Christian texts in Sogdian are translations from Syriac originals, they naturally represent the traditional and popular genres written in that language. The first Christian Sogdian texts to be published[1] were New Testament fragments from Matthew, Luke, John, 1 Corinthians and Galatians, based on the Syriac *Peshitta*, the main Syriac version of the Bible, and their character puts them clearly in the category of *pericopes* or selections to be used at particular liturgical occasions. Two decades later, further Christian materials of a different nature and origin were made public;[2] among them are a fragment of the story which tells "how the cross of [Our] Lord was found in Jerusalem in the days of the pious queen Helena, the mother of Constantine, the Christian king"; a fragment from an abridged version of the Book of Daniel in which Daniel acts as the interpreter of Nebuchadnezzar's (*nbwkdncr*) dream; passages from the martyrologies, a genre richly represented in Syriac literature, of Sergius and Baršabbā; a passage, resembling one in the apocryphal *Actus Petri cum Simone*, in which Simon Petrus triumphs over Simon Magus by an act of resuscitation in the presence of the imperial court. Subsequently a series of new text editions was begun by O. Hansen, who published fragments of the passion of St George[3] and soon after other texts.[4] Hansen succeeded in identifying fragments belonging to the *Antirrheticus of Euagrius Ponticus* (4th century), the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, a composition originating in Egypt which became popular in Christian circles since the 5th–6th centuries, and passages from homiletic and martyrologic literature.[5] The process of identification and interpretation of the texts in the Hansen collection was successfully

[1] Müller, "Sogdische Texte I".
[2] Müller and Lentz, "Sogdische Texte II".
[3] Hansen, "Berliner sogdische Texte I". See É. Benveniste, "Fragments des Actes de Saint Georges en version sogdienne", *JA* 1943–5, pp. 91–116, and I. Gershevitch, "On the Sogdian St. George Passion", *JRAS* 1946, pp. 179–84.
[4] Hansen, "Berliner sogdische Texte II".
[5] The understanding of the texts in *op. cit.* has been furthered by Benveniste, "Études I" and "II"; D. N. MacKenzie, "Christian Sogdian notes", *BSOAS* XXXIII (1970), pp. 116–24; N. Sims-Williams, "A Sogdian fragment of a work by Dadišo' Qaṭraya", *Asia Major* XVIII (1973), pp. 88–105.

carried further by M. Schwartz,[1] who identified a story, put in the time of the Roman emperor Trajan (52/53–117), in which the Roman general Placidas (*pylyqydws*) becomes a Christian, adopts the name Eustathius (*'wstθys*) and is martyred together with his wife; a discourse on humility by Abbas Isaias (5th century); a story of eight young Ephesians who were incarcerated in a cave under the anti-Christian emperor Decius (201–51) and woke up two hundred years later under the pious Theodosius II (401–50), a tale parallel to the widely-known legend of "The Seven Sleepers" of Ephesus; a fragment on Father Apellen or Apelles (*'plyn ptry*), a monastic hermit and Egyptian desert ascetic; fragments from the *Doctrina Apostolorum*, dating from about the end of the 3rd century, in which Simon Petrus addresses the Apostles.[2]

The literature in Christian Sogdian ranks with that of the Buddhist texts. Its secondary nature allows for little recognition of literary values which were not already in the original Syriac. The term "demotic", used by Schwartz for its language, equally applies to its style in the sense that it addresses itself to the common people. On the other hand, the linguistic yield of the Christian Sogdian materials is and will remain of high value.

4. The number of Sogdian documents of a non-religious inspiration and purpose is very much smaller than that of the religious texts. What has survived is of different local and chronological origin. The oldest evidence for writing in Sogdian characters appears on coins from the Sogdian homeland. Their dates and the reading of their legends are mostly uncertain and their data are primarily of historical value. The oldest specimens may date from the middle of the 2nd century.[3] From the other end of the area in which Sogdian was spoken come the so-called "Ancient Letters",[4] a collection of five more or less complete and four fragmentary letters and documents of different

[1] M. Schwartz, *Studies in the texts of the Christian Sogdians*, Ph.D. dissertation of the University of California, Berkeley, Calif., 1967. Schwartz has been so kind as to provide me with revised typescript versions of several chapters of his dissertation on which I have drawn in what follows in this survey. He is also in the process of preparing a study of the language of the Christian Sogdian texts.

[2] Schwartz' dissertation also contains three previously unpublished fragments, passages from a Book of Life, a Book of Psalms, comparable to the so-called Psalter in Middle Persian, and a Discourse against Evil Thoughts.

[3] See Allotte de la Fuÿe, "Monnaies incertaines de la Sogdiane et des contrées voisines", *RN* XIV (1910), pp. 6–73 and pp. 281–333, XXVIII (1925), pp. 26–50 and pp. 143–69, XXIX (1926), pp. 29–40 and pp. 141–51.

[4] Reichelt II, pp. 1–56, with facsimiles and glossary.

length, the longest having some sixty lines; they were discovered by Sir Aurel Stein in a watchtower of the Chinese Wall, west of Tun-huang, and have been convincingly ascribed to the beginning of the 4th century A.D.[1] Their subject-matter reflects the unstable political situation along the "Silk Route" after the destruction of Lo-yang, the capital of Northern China, by the Hsiung-nu in A.D. 311; partly due to the state of their preservation the understanding of many of the details of their contents is still incomplete.

A number of ostraca, found at a palace at Varakhsha, to the west of Bukhārā, date from the 4th century and belong to the rulers of Bukhārā of the time.[2] Other samples of Sogdian writing on different kinds of material date from the 5th and 6th centuries.[3] Coins, discovered in Panjikant, date from the reign of Gūrak, ruler of Samarkand (A.D. 711–38) and inscribed ostraca from the same site are also known.[4] Most of these materials, the nature of which does not lend itself to easy interpretation, have not yet been published in a definitive form, and a comprehensive, linguistic and palaeographical study of them is still outstanding.

Highly important documentation was discovered, in 1933 and after, by Russian archaeologists in the ruins of a castle at Mount Mugh in northern Tājīkistān. These documents date from the 8th century and are part of the business correspondence from the archives of the Sogdian chieftain Dēwāstīč, the last ruler of Panjikant, who took refuge, in A.D. 722 (?), in a fortress on Mount Mugh after the death, in A.D. 715, of Quṭaiba b. Muslim. The destruction of the fortress followed the capture and death of Dēwāstīč as the result of further military action in the area. The study of these documents was initiated by A. A. Freiman,[5] but the decisive breakthrough was achieved by V. A. Livshitz;[6] the script in which they are written, a cursive form of the Samarkand alphabet, the often incomplete state of preservation and their technical, economic, social and juridical, content matter make their interpretation, on which apart from Freiman and Livshitz also M. N. Bogolyubov and O. I. Smirnova have laboured, often uncertain and subject to conjecture.

[1] Henning, "The date of the Sogdian Ancient Letters".
[2] V. A. Shishkin, *Varakhsha* (Moscow, 1963), p. 66.
[3] Henning, "Mitteliranisch", pp. 52–4.
[4] Livshitz, "A Sogdian alphabet", and O. I. Smirnova, *Katalog monet s gorodišča Pyandžikent* (Moscow, 1963).
[5] *Sogdiskij sbornik*.
[6] *Sogdijskie dokumenty s Gory Muγ*; see also I. Gershevitch, "The Sogdian word for 'Advice' and some Muγ documents", *Central Asiatic Journal* VII (The Hague, 1962), pp. 77–95.

Two inscriptions from the 9th century deserve mention,[1] one, a trilingual text (Sogdian–Chinese–Uighur) found in Qarabalgasun, the capital of the Uighurs on the Orkhon river in Mongolia, speaks of the conversion to Manichaeism of the third Uighur Khaghan in A.D. 762;[2] and the other, a short inscription, found in Ladakh, on the border of Kashmir and India, on the very outskirts of the Sogdian world, probably dates from A.D. 841/842 ("in the year 210" of the Yazdgard era[?]) and commemorates the visit of an agent (*'zγ'nt*) from Samarkand to the Tibetan Khaghan (*γ'γ'n*).[3]

The amount of secular literary compositions in Sogdian is quite limited. Welcome exceptions include a short Rustam text, preserved in two successive fragments,[4] not too short, however, to preserve a reference to *rγš-*, Rustam's beloved horse; a fragment of a lapidary (*nwbwsth* "Book of the nine [? stones]")[5] which appears to be part of "a shamanist rain-maker's handbook" and mentions *cδ-* "rain-stone" and *'psβr'yc 'stky* "sheep's shoulderblade bone" among that profession's paraphernalia;[6] a short medical fragment with prescriptions for emetics, purgatives and aphrodisiacs;[7] and a short text on astrology.[8]

The extent of writing in Sogdian from different times and locations, for various purposes and in a variety of genres, over the period of five to six centuries in which Sogdian speaking communities were an important constituent of Central Asian society and culture, can only be called impressive. The data contained in the written documentation though necessarily defective and only in part representative of what at one time existed, are sufficient to be considered and used as an indispensable source for the reconstruction of a historical picture of Sogdian political, economic, social, religious and artistic culture.

[1] For a bilingual (Sogdian–Sanskrit) inscription see L. Bazin, "Turcs et Sogdiens: les enseignements de l'inscription de Bugut (Mongolie)", in *Mélanges linguistiques offerts à Émile Benveniste* (Paris, 1975), pp. 38–45 (Société de linguistique de Paris; Collection linguistique 70).

[2] O. Hansen, "Zur soghdischen Inschrift auf dem dreisprachigen Denkmal von Karabalgasun", *Journal de la Société Finno-ougrienne* XLIV (Helsinki, 1930), pp. 3–39.

[3] Benveniste, "Notes sogdiennes" [IV], pp. 502–5.

[4] Benveniste, *Textes*, pp. 134–6 and Reichelt II, pp. 62–3; see Henning, "Sogdian tales", p. 465, n. 2.

[5] Benveniste, *Textes*, pp. 59–73 and Reichelt II, p. 65; see Henning, "Mitteliranisch", p. 85 on the uncertain reading of the title, *nwbwsth* or *twbwsth*?

[6] See Henning, "Sogdian tales", p. 465, n. 2, and "Sogdian texts of Paris", p. 729.

[7] Benveniste, "Textes", pp. 150–2; see Henning, "Sogdian texts of Paris", p. 713, n. 5.

[8] Benveniste, "Textes", p. 156.

CHAPTER 34

KHOTANESE SAKA LITERATURE

The word "literature" in this chapter heading must be understood to refer to all written documents in the Saka languages, alike the documents of administration and business and the literary texts. Even so the bulk is not large, since much has been lost, though on the literary side of impressive quality.

The name too of the Saka peoples in this chapter has been chosen for its width of application. It has been generally accepted that these documents from Khotan and Tumshuq are from Saka peoples who had become sedentary. The word "Saka", however, does not appear in the texts themselves.[1] Its justification is the following.

In the Old Persian Achaemenian inscriptions of Pārsa, Darius listed *Gandāra Sakā Maka*,[2] and wrote *hačā Sakaibiš tyaiy para Sugdam* "from the Saka who are beyond Sogdiana";[3] similarly Xerxes has *Dahā Sakā*.[4] With these is to be joined the statement of Herodotus (VII. 64), *οἱ γὰρ Πέρσαι πάντας τοὺς Σκύθας καλέουσι Σάκας* "for the Persians call all the Skuthas Sakas". In the 2nd century B.C. the Chinese wrote of Sak (later pronunciation Sö and Sai) to the north-west of Kāshghar. In the second half of the 2nd century B.C. Saka people descended on the Greeks of Bactria and eventually gave their name to ancient Drangiana (Zranka), which has since been called "Land of the Sakas". Hence this name is found *passim*. It occurs in a wider sense in the Kharoṣṭhī inscription of the Mathurā Lion Capital (mid 2nd century B.C.) as *sa<u>k</u>astana* (<u>*k*</u> = gh); it is found later in Buddhist Sanskrit as *śakasthāna* (with ś- replacing s-). For the new name of Drangiana the Greeks wrote Σακαστανή (Isidoros Kharakenos), and later in the Shāpūr I inscription occur Parthian *skstn* and Greek Σεγιστανη. Agathias (3rd century A.D.) used Σεγεστανῶν of the *ἔθνος* "people" and of the *βασιλεύς* "king", whence Latin had Segestani; but on the *Tabula Peutingeriana* Saga was written. In Iran the name was Sakastāna, transmitted in Armenian Sakastan, Sakstan and Sagastan with adjective *sagčik* and *sačik*, appearing in Pahlavī[5] as *sgst'n* or *syst'n*, in Sasanian inscriptions as *sk'n MLKA* (**sakān šāh*) and

[1] See also chap. 7.
[2] Persepolis 18.
[3] *Ibid.* h 5–6.
[4] *Ibid.* h 26.
[5] *Greater Bundahišn* 78. 15.

sk'n MLKTA (**sakān bānbišn*), in Middle Persian of Turfān as *sg'n b'nbyšn*, in Greek as Σεγαν σαα, in Sogdian Christian as *sgst'n*, in Syriac as *sgstn* with adjective *sgzyq-*, in Arabic as Sajastān, Sijistān, Sagān šāh, in New Persian as Saistān (Sīstān) with adjective *sagzī*.

Saka languages are known in documents from Khotan and Tumshuq, north-east of Kāshghar, belonging to the pre-Islamic period; and in languages of Shughnān, Rōshnān, Mujān and Wakhān of the Pāmir region, recorded during the 19th century and this century. The name Rōshnān is found in the Greek of Ktesias[1] in the form Ῥωξανάκη (Ῥωξανάκης τῆς πόλεως ἔνθα Σάκαις τὸ βασίλειον ἦν), a *polis* or town of the Sakai. The language of Wakhān shares a notable phonetic feature with the language of Khotan: Wakhān *yaš* "horse" and *īšn* "iron" agree with Khotan *aśśa-* and *hīśśana-*, where other Iranian dialects developed either -sp- or -s-, as in *aspa-*, *assa-*, and *aspana-*, *āsan*. In vocabulary, too, the four Khotan animal names *draṃṣṣa-*, *purṣṣa-*, *rūś-* (in the compound *rūś-kaga-* "skin of the *rūś-*"), and *jūṣḍa-*, correspond to Wakhī *drukš* "bull", *vrokš* "male ovis Poli", *rūš* "ovis Poli", and *yukš* "ibex" (which in turn is connected with the *youška-* of Armenian loan-word *youška-parik*, rendering Greek ὀνοκένταυρος, and with New Persian *vušk* "ass");[2] but Wakhī *vuks*, *fuks*, *fūgz* "snake", Shughnī *devušk* (probably "the bending animal" from *baug-* "to bend", as in Baločī *bōg*, and like Old Indian *bhujaṃga-* "snake") has not been so far found in Khotan, where for "snake" *śśaysda-*, Tumshuq *śazda-* is used.

A word *saka-* occurs in Central Asian Buddhist Sanskrit Saka-rāja, possibly referring to Saka "Yarkand", but this and other traces have not yet been proved to be this same name Saka. Thus in Khotan documents occur *Sakāñä Ṣanīrä* "Ṣanīra of Sakāna", and *Sakāṃ hīvī* "belonging to Sakāna". With ś- occur further Śakām and Śakä. Buddhist Sanskrit has the phrase *śakānī lipi* "the script of the Śaka [Tibetan *śa-ka-ni*]". A property (*dastkert*) called Sakān in a Nisā Parthian document has been thought to refer to the Saka name. A Buddhist legendary cliché associates, in the "Book of Zambasta", *śśakaunä . . . yavanä palvalä* "the Saka, Yavana [Greeks] and Palvala [Parthians]",[3] a list recurring in Tibetan in the author Bu-ston as *śakuna*, *yavana*, *palhika*, and elsewhere in Chinese texts.

Rōtastahm, as it is written in the *Ayātkār ī Zarērān*,[4] meaning

[1] Ed. Gilmore, frag. 21, from Nikolaus Damaskenos, frag. 12.
[2] Bailey, *Khotanese Texts* VI, 91.
[3] Ed. Emmerick, p. 398 (24. 393).
[4] J. M. Jamasp-Asana (ed.), *Pahlavi Texts* I (Bombay, 1897), p. 3, para. 28.

probably "strong in body" (New Persian Rōstam, Rustam, Sogdian *rwstm* and Armenian Rostom), of Zābul (called Jāguḍa in Sanskrit), the greatest epic hero of the *Shāh-nāma*, is named the *sagzī* "the Saka".

In the documents from Khotan the writers use for their own language an adjective with double suffix in *-aka-* and *-āva-*, from *hvatana-* "Khotan": thus in the "Book of Zambasta" *hvatäno*,[1] *hvatänau*,[2] *hvatanau*,[3] *hvanau*,[4] later in the medical text, the *Siddhasāra hvaṃno vī* and *hvaṃnau vī* "in Khotan language".[5] In the *Avalokiteśvara-dhāraṇī* we find *hvaṃnye phari jsa* "in the Khotan language"[6] from *hvaṃnaa-*. The country was called in the north-western Prakrit of Kroraina in Kharoṣṭhī script Khotana, in Central Asian Buddhist Sanskrit Gaustana-deśa, and in Kuči–Sanskrit Korttana, in Khotanese Hvatana-, Hvamna and Hvaṃ, like the contemporary pronunciation Huanna cited by Hsüan-tsang in A.D. 641. In Sogdian the adjective *γwδnyk* (**hvaδanīk*) is found.[7] The Tibetans had Ḥu-then and Yvu-then, and the Chinese used Yü-t'ien.

In the fragments from Tumshuq, which is a ruined site near Maral-bashi, and from further east in Murtuq, a word *kāñcako* occurs in a still obscure context,[8] but it seems to be the name given by al-Kāshgharī in his *Dīvān lughāt al-turk* to the language, which was not Turkish, spoken in the villages about Kāshghar as *känčäkī* in the 9th century. This is in turn the name known in Tibetan books in the form Ga-ḥjag (pronounced Ganjag) for Kāshghar.

Some still undecided connection lies between the Tokhāra and the Saka. The Saka Khotan *ṣṣau* is the title of a subordinate ruler or governor (below the *rrund-* "king", and beside the *rrāysan-* "ruler"). The same title in the form *ša* meaning also subordinate ruler is used in A.D. 90 by the Üe-ṭṣï who are, according to the Kuči scholar Kumārajīva, the Tokhāra of Indian Buddhist books. Since there is no evidence that this word *ša* is borrowed, the Tokhāra seem to be Iranian-speaking.

The documents from Khotan and Tumshuq in the Saka languages are partly from private correspondence, partly from the chancellery of Khotan dealing with administration; but more largely from the Vihāras, the centres of learning, monasteries (in Tibetan *gčug-lag-khan*).

[1] Ed. Emmerick, p. 100 (5. 19).
[2] *Ibid.* p. 366 (23. 272).
[3] *Ibid.* p. 342 (23. 2).
[4] *Ibid.* p. 8 (1. 189).
[5] Bailey, *Khotanese Texts* I, 38 (fol. 103r, line 3 and line 4).
[6] *Khotanese Texts* III, 4.
[7] W. B. Henning, *Sogdica* (London, 1940), p. 8.
[8] S. Konow, "Ein neuer Saka-Dialikt", p. 813 (Text viii, l. 3), and "The oldest dialect of Khotanese Saka", p. 172.

The literary works are predominantly translations from Prakrit or Buddhist Sanskrit books, but the writers also adapted Buddhist texts and essayed original compositions.

The translated literature was extensive. One manuscript folio of the *Lakṣaṇa-sūtra* has survived marked 611.[1] Another single folio of a Buddhist sūtra-text numbered 255 has survived;[2] and folios 134–48 of the *Śūraṃgama-sūtra*;[3] the *Saṃghāṭa-sūtra* is about half preserved with a final folio numbered 152.[4] The longest text, extant in 440 folios, is the miscellany "Book of Zambasta", containing about four thousand verses in twenty-four cantos or sections.[5]

The following titles of translated books are known in the Khotan language. They are here illustrated by some quotations.

Of medical texts there are extant fifty-four folios of Ravigupta's *Siddhasāra*. It has survived in a complete Tibetan translation[6] and in two highly divergent Sanskrit manuscripts;[7] there is also a Turkish Uigur translation of which some portions have been published.[8] To the Khotanese translation of the *Siddhasāra* is prefixed a metrical introduction, in which the occasion of the translation is set out; here we read, "I come with reverence to the three jewels with faith in love, that I may be able to translate this technical treatise according to its true meaning. This Indian technical work is full of meaning, studied formerly by scholars, in a foreign language, in a difficult style, requiring knowledge, but it remained unproductive . . . It was neglected by the physicians . . . They applied unsuitable medicines and many died . . . The king ordered a translation from the Tibetan language . . . The Tai-śī, the great teacher, assisted and the complete book was translated . . . May I be remembered when the treatments are undertaken."[9]

A long text in Buddhist Sanskrit verses in which the Buddha instructs Jīvaka in medicine has been preserved in the original Sanskrit and in Khotanese translation;[10] to this text for convenient reference the name *Jīvaka-pustaka* "Book of Jīvaka" has been given. The text begins with an introductory set of verses: "Homage to Brahman,

[1] Bailey, *Texts* v, 91; Leumann, *Buddhistische Literatur* I, *Nebenstücke*, pp. 116–22.

[2] *Texts* III, 31.

[3] Bailey, *Khotanese Buddhist Texts*, pp. 1–7.

[4] *Texts* v, 78.

[5] Ed. and tr. R. E. Emmerick; Leumann, *Das nordarische* (*sakische*) *Lehrgedicht des Buddhismus*.

[6] Ed. Pekin, vol. 148, 5877.

[7] *Texts* I, 1–134; others found later.

[8] G. R. Rachmati, "Zur Heilkunde der Uiguren" I *SPAW* 1930, pp. 451–73; II *SPAW* 1932, pp. 401–48.

[9] Bailey, "The Preface to the Siddhasāra-sāstra", in W. B. Henning and Ehsan Yarshater (eds.), *A Locust's Leg* (London, 1962), pp. 31–8.

[10] *Texts* I, 136–95.

homage to the Siddhas and Vidyādharas [supernatural beings with abnormal knowledge]. The master [*bhagavant-*] spoke, Listen to me. I will expound this, O Jīvaka, fully. Whatever are the medicines in Jambudvīpa [India] which remove things deleterious, among all the medicines I will expound here those that are of the superior sorts. Listen."

A third long medical text is preserved in a Paris manuscript.[1] Another medical text has pictures of demons called *graha-* "raptores, beings who seize", which attack children.[2] It is of interest also to recall that the earliest extant Buddhist Sanskrit medical text, the Bower manuscript, was found in Chinese Turkestan.

From the *Dharmapada* anthology of Buddhist verses two verses only, in the *Udānavarga*,[3] have been noticed in a Khotanese translation in the "Book of Zambasta".[4] It was, however, from Khotan that the Kharoṣṭhī *Dharmapada* was obtained;[5] it was a text which probably seemed to be antiquated in Khotan once they had moved from the Mahāsānghika school to the more developed Mahāyāna. In Kuči however the *Udānavarga* was translated into the local language and so also was its commentary the *Udānālaṃkāra*. The popularity of the *Udānavarga* is shown in the new edition of the Sanskrit text from seven hundred fragments of two hundred manuscripts. Portions of the *Dharmapada* have also been recovered in Sogdian transcription.[6] A part has also been found in a Kharoṣṭhī wooden manuscript in Kroraina, no. 510.

In Khotan the main Buddhist literature is of the Mahāyāna, a little of the subsequent Vajrayāna. But the "Annals of Li" (Khotan) report the earlier presence of sixteen Mahāsānghika monasteries; this school had texts in Prakrit.

The longest Khotanese text, the miscellany in the "Book of Zambasta", expounds the doctrine of *citta-mātra*, "only thought" of the Buddhist *Vijñānavāda* in canto 4. The Bodhisattva doctrines are represented in canto 12 in a text based upon the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi-sūtra*.[7] The usual story of the Bodhisattva's birth and youth is related in canto 24. The legend of Bhadra the illusionist is told in detail in canto 2,

[1] *Ibid.* III, 84–93; shorter pieces are in III, 17–19, 78.
[2] *Ibid.* III, 135.
[3] F. Bernhard, *Udānavarga* I (Göttingen, 1965), 137–8 (iv. *Apramādavarga*, vv. 36, 37, reversed in the Khotanese).
[4] Ed. Emmerick, pp. 330–1 (22. 276–7).
[5] See J. Brough, *The Gāndhārī Dharmapada* (London, 1962), p. 2.
[6] E. Benveniste, *Textes sogdiens* (Paris, 1940), pp. 107, 113.
[7] This doctrine occurs also in the fragmentary *Boddhisattva-bhūmi-sūtra* in *Texts* V, 91–101, 148–50.

and corresponds, with many differences, to the Tibetan text in the edition of C. Régamey. The future Maitreya, already familiar in Pali Metteyya, is the subject of canto 22 in a story which corresponds, though with some freedom, to the Buddhist Sanskrit *Maitreya-vyākaraṇa* in the editions of S. Lévi and P. C. Majumder. The story of the collapse of the Buddhist Dharma, the doctrine, before the Mleccha (barbarian) onslaught is related in canto 23 and is known in Chinese and Tibetan translations.[1]

The *Suvarṇabhāsa-sūtra*, the "Book of Golden Light", was translated in Khotan, and largely survives, partly in older Khotan language, and partly in the later form.[2] The Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese texts have been made easily available by J. Nobel.

Complete in Khotanese translation are the *Sumukha-sūtra*;[3] the *Bhadracaryā-deśanā*;[4] the *Avalokiteśvara-dhāraṇī*,[5] not yet found in Buddhist Sanskrit original and only partly agreeing with a Chinese text (Taishō 1115). The *Jātakastava*[6] is complete; it is, according to the introduction, a rendering of a poem by Vedyaśīla of the Sāmāña monastery in Khotan. In it fifty tales are told called *jātaka*, that is of the former lives ascribed to the Buddha, including the famous Viśvantara legend, which is known also in Sogdian (edited by E. Benveniste). The *Sad-dharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, the "Book of the lotus of the Excellent Law",[7] is known in a summary of all the *parivarta* sections. The *Aparimitāyuḥ-sūtra*[8] is complete in two copies. To the complete *Vajracchedikā-sūtra* there is a metrical preface, which includes an etymology of the title. The final Sanskrit single verse on transiency is elaborated into a separate verse to each simile.[9] The preface reads as follows:

I revere the threefold Buddhas, tritemporal, with exceeding faith, I revere the triple *Dāta* "Law", the threefold *Bhikṣu-saṅgha*, "community". I so revere the sūtra-text the *Prajñā-pāramitā*, "the perfection of wisdom", the mother of the Buddhas, the best of all perfections, profound, reverend, exalted, showing the supremely true yoga-method of *dharmas* beginning with *bodhicaryā*, the foremost, wherein is no thought (that is, the *citta-mātra*), appropriations, nor afflictions, supported by the *tathatā*, "the absolute", eternal like the *dharma-kāya*, "the body of transcendence". This perfection

[1] J. Przyluski, *La Légende de l'empereur Açoka* (Paris, 1923); F. W. Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents Concerning Chinese Turkestan* I (London, 1935); R. E. Emmerick, *Tibetan Texts concerning Khotan* (London, 1967).

[2] *Texts* I, 232–57; V, 106–9, 380–1.

[3] *Buddhist Texts*, pp. 135–43.

[4] *Texts* I, 222–30; tr. Asmussen (see bibliography).

[5] *Ibid.* III, 1–13.

[6] *Ibid.* I, 198–219.

[7] *Ibid.* II, 5–6; III, 58–61.

[8] *Buddhist Texts*, pp. 94–8; *Texts* V, 243–5.

[9] *Texts* III, 19–29.

of wisdom the all-knowing Buddha expounded in summary, this text of three hundred verses, which is named the *Vajracchedikā-sūtra*. It destroys all the afflictions arising from acts and obstructions, grievous evil, like the *vajra* "thunderbolt"; therefore it is [called] the "Book of the thunderbolt cutting". For that reason it is so reverend, exalted. He who learns it, holds it, or recites it, causes it to be written, he who deigns to learn the whole of the Dāta "Law", he shall prosper in all.

The story of the emperor Aśoka and his minister Yaśas, and of Aśoka and his son Kunāla is preserved in two copies.[1] The legend of the Kushān emperor Kaniṣka and his Buddhist monument the *stūpa* and *vihāra*, and the legend of Kaniṣka and his learned friend Aśvaghoṣa occur in Khotanese versions.[2]

The story of the Indian hero Rāma and his wife Sītā is told in verse,[3] with features familiar also in the Tibetan version.[4]

The story of the Licchavi king Vimalakīrti is represented by a text lacking beginning and conclusion,[5] different from the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* known in Tibetan, Chinese and partly in Sogdian.

The *Bhadrakalpikā-sūtra* is complete but for five missing Buddha-names, and has in the Khotanese text both an original introduction and an epilogue.[6] A full text of the Prajñā-pāramitā doctrine, not traced in this form elsewhere, is in the Paris manuscript Pelliot 3513.[7]

Portions exist of the *Karma-vibhanga*, "the Book of allocations according to the acts", a text dealing with the acts (*karma*) and their results in secular life.[8] It recalls the Sanskrit *Karmavibhanga*,[9] and the Sogdian sūtra of causes and results. The text is formular: "There is an act (*karman*) through which a man becomes a member of the Great House [*bäsī-värai*, from older **visah puθra-ka-*]". A small part of the *Kalpa-rāja-sūtra*, of which a complete text survives in Tibetan, has been printed.[10]

Texts of the *Vajrayāna*, "the Diamond Vehicle", the latest form of Buddhist speculation, occur, but only few in number.[11] Here there is mention of Ārya-māmakī and the other Tantra genii. A passage will

[1] *Buddhist Texts*, pp. 40–4; tr. in *Bulletin of the Institute of Tibetology* (Sikkim, 1967).

[2] *Texts* II, 107–8; tr. Bailey in "Kaniṣka", *JRAS* 1942, pp. 14–28; tr. Bailey in "Visa Saṃgrāma", *Asia Major* XI (1965), 107–8.

[3] *Texts* III, 65–76.

[4] Partly published by F. W. Thomas, "A Rāmāyana Story in Tibetan", in *Indian Studies in Honor of C. R. Lanman* (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), pp. 193–212, and by J. K. Balbir, *L'Histoire de Rāma en tibétain* (Paris, 1963); later, J. W. de Jong, "The Tun-Huang Manuscript of the Tibetan RāmāyaSa Story", *IIJ* XIX (1977), pp. 37–8.

[5] *Buddhist Texts*, pp. 104–13; tr. É. Lamotte, *L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti* (Louvain, 1962).

[6] *Buddhist Texts*, pp. 76–90.

[7] *Ibid.* pp. 54–61.

[8] *Texts* V, 296–302.

[9] S. Lévi (ed. and tr.), *Fragments de textes koutchéens* (*Udanavarga . . . Karmavibhanga*) (Paris, 1933).

[10] *Texts* V, 14.

[11] *Buddhist Texts*, pp. 149–56.

show the character of such a text: "The *kṣānti* perfection 'forgiveness', that is, the *devatā* 'divinity' called Gītā 'song personified', she who makes the song of all the Buddhas. The *vīrya* perfection 'vigour' that is, the *devatā* 'divinity' called Nrtya 'dance', through which they swiftly reach the highest enlightenment."[1]

The *Bhaiṣajyaguru-vaiḍūryaprabha-rāja-sūtra*, in which one meets the passage describing the accountancy before Yama, judge of the dead, is partially preserved.[2] The Sanskrit text was discovered in the Gilgit Stūpa and has been edited by Nalinaksha Dutt.

There are texts containing invocations to the Buddhas, and to the *sthaviras*, "seniors of the group of sixteen",[3] and invocations to holy things and places, such as shrines, stūpas and their appurtenances.[4]

The *Manjuśrī-nairātmyāvatāra-sūtra*[5] shares a large number of its verses in later Khotan language with the older text in the "Book of Zambasta". The text has not yet been identified in Sanskrit.

A versified biography of the Bodhisattva is partially known;[6] and a poem (*stotra*) in honour of Avalokiteśvara[7] and the *Jñānolkā-sūtra*[8] also are extant.

Contrasting with these books of translation were the many adaptations. The story of Rāma became an original Khotanese poem. It is a brief epic, and only at the end does it suddenly turn to a Buddhist interpretation, when it is said that Rāma was the Buddha in a former life. The poet has attempted to tell the whole story of Rāma in 255 manuscript lines. The story must therefore move fast. Description is scant, but the action maintains the story at an heroic pitch.

The lyrical poems[9] express a natural delight in the beauties of spring, the fountains with crystal waters, the varied flowers and the many singing birds, the lovers with jewels and pearl necklaces, singing and playing. Thus we find the following:

In the bright fresh amorous spring-time when the mind is happy with love, men and women are greatly longing for one another. They soon are in love when the flowers have blossomed . . . The birds, the cuckoos, parrots, jays, karavinkas, starlings, kakva birds, hoopoes, sparrows, crows, doves, ducks, partridges, and the water-birds are flying about in the sky, amorously passionate among the trees.

An unusual poem[10] reveals the poet, a *bhikṣu* mendicant from a

[1] One of these texts has been translated in Gishō Nakanō, *Studies of Esoteric Buddhism and Tantrism* (Kōyasan, 1965).
[2] *Texts* III, 124–5; V, 87–9.
[3] *Ibid.* III, 112; III, 30–1; *Buddhist Texts*, p. 100.
[4] *Texts* III, 51.
[5] *Buddhist Texts*, pp. 113–35.
[6] Leumann, *Buddhistische Literatur*, pp. 170–4.
[7] *Ibid.* pp. 168–70.
[8] *Ibid.* pp. 157–62; *Texts* V, 50–1.
[9] *Ibid.* III, 34–48.
[10] *Texts* III, 79–81.

monastery, travelling to the Hill, the Mazār Tagh. It is expressed in the first person and the poet relates how he took up staff and bowl to go to the Hill. He rides at times on horseback, and at times he is walking. He comes to the steep bank of a river where the water is saline, and dried up, the reeds thick beside it. He goes down into a deep hollow among the hills, where underfoot the stones are as thick as the nuts of the pistachio tree. The road is difficult by reason of the rocks, such as no painter has painted, and he has many streams to cross. This text is at present only partly interpreted.

A verse of sentiment is found in a miscellany;[1] the poet writes: "In the amorous time the flowers grow forth; this rose [*vala*] I need, fair to see and sweet-scented. The rose may have faded as I hold it in my hand, but I do not need it to keep you in my heart."

In one poem[2] there is a reference to the draught of the *durauśa* drink, in which we have a recollection of the ancient drink, called in the Avesta *dūraoša-* and in the ancient Indian Veda *duroṣa-*, an epithet of the sacred *sóma-*, hence an old intoxicant of the Indo-Iranian period.

A romantic story, unhappily only in a fragment,[3] tells the love story of a young gallant, finely attired, who sees the daughter of a stern old minister (*amātya*) and with her spends a joyous time with songs and flute.

The famous story of the young prince and the fairy bride is retold from an Indian source in the text of Sudhana and Manoharā;[4] it has reached us in three manuscripts. The prince, after his bride has been driven from the city, roams wildly seeking her, questioning the animals in his distraction – a romantic passage, which is found in the original story in the Buddhist collection called the *Divyāvadāna*, and has been compared with the love-distracted Purūravas in Kālidāsa's drama, the *Vikramorvaśī*.

In a panegyric to the king of Khotan Śrī Viśa Dharma an old legend is cited which traced the royal house back to the first Buddhist king Mahāsammata, and to Aśoka, and there is mention of the Chinese king Cayam,[5] who is known otherwise only in the Tibetan "Annals of Li". The writer reports of Viśa Dharma that he sought a bride from Shachū. He says: "It was the fifth regnal year of the king Viśa Dharma, the horse year, the seventh month, when there arose in the royal mind a wish for a queen, desirable, pure, born among the Chinese, with a view to the continuance of this royal Golden Family. He deigned to

[1] *Ibid.* II, 75. [2] *Ibid.* III, 101. [3] *Ibid.* III, 105–6.

[4] *Buddhist Texts*, pp. 11–39; tr. Bailey "The Sudhana poem of Rddhiprabhāva" *BSOAS* XXIX (1966), 506–32. [5] *Texts* II, 53.

send a full hundred emissaries hither to Shachū, valiant champions, sons of the highest, all of the noblest, equal in rank, with excellent qualities, youthful, splendid, fighters, meritorious, believers, steadfast, of good family, pre-eminent, under the charge of the highest, at all times self-controlled."

Less striking is a text setting out the superstitions associated with the twelve-year animal cycle;[1] here it is said: "When a man is born at midnight in the Ox Year, he becomes happy, and when sons are his, they are all happy; and as to his sower of crops he is excellent, and his cattle are abundant. His trading is a success. Yet he is in danger from water and fire."

Only one geographical text has been found, in which travellers in the time of Abhimanyugupta of Kashmir (A.D. 958–72) make a journey from Khotan to the Adhiṣṭhana capital city of Kashmir; there it is stated: "To the south along the river is a great town (*kanthā-*) by name Gīḍagītta (Gilgit). There are situated eight monasteries, built of stone, and a royal residence is there in four courts. To the south the road to India is along the Golden River. There on the bank of the river is a large place called Śīlathasa (Chiltās)."[2] Later the capital of Kashmir is described recalling the description of the Adhiṣṭhana (modern Śrī-nagara) of al-Bīrūnī.[3] This text thus provides one of the earliest references to the towns Gilgit and Chiltās.[4]

On the religious side there is a poem in honour of Armyāya, the Amitāyus of Buddhist Sanskrit texts and the Amida so important in Japan.[5] Much devotional poetry was written, a type of *deśanā* or "confession, profession", sometimes under a particular name as of Tcūsyau[6] and Tcūmttehi.[7] One *Deśanā* "profession" reads in part as follows:

I now with faith in love, while the hair in my many pores on my limbs now stands erect, with my forehead I come with reverence, in the many fields of religion, to the three jewels [the Buddha, the Law, and the Community]. I desire so to perform the threefold honour and worship before the Buddhas, however few my merits and however defective my understanding, having my eyes clouded with the rain of ignorance . . . I make donations to all the Buddhas, of the standards, parasols, umbrellas, adorned with the seven precious things [gold, silver, pearls, gems, crystals, diamonds and coral], the beautiful lotus flowers with the thousand petals and the other lotuses and water-lilies, the brocades and garlands, necklaces and royal garments.[8]

1 *Ibid.* III, 13–15. 2 *Ibid.* II, 56, ll. 12–15. 3 *Ibid.* ll. 28–35.

4 Translation in Bailey, *Saka Documents Text Volume*, pp. 70ff.

5 *Texts* IV, 36–7. 6 *Buddhist Texts*, p. 146. 7 *Ibid.* pp. 47–53.

8 *Ibid.* pp. 62–6; Bailey, "The Profession of Prince Tcūm-Ttehi", in E. Bender (ed.), *Indological Studies in Honor of W. Norman Brown* (New Haven, Conn., 1962), pp. 18–22.

It was also a practice to commission a copy of a sacred Buddhist Sanskrit text and to get the writer to insert the patron's name with a prayer. Thus in the *Sitātapatrā-dhāraṇī*[1] the writer has put the phrase *rakṣa rakṣa mama rājñā vījitti saṃbhavasya* "protection, protection for me, the king Vijita Sambhava",[2] whose name is well recorded elsewhere.[3]

A famous Buddhist book of simple ethical tales which has been transmitted in Chinese and Tibetan was first produced in Khotan. The Tibetan title is *Damamūka* (in which most probably is concealed the Prakrit of *dharmamukha*, "the introductory teaching"),[4] and the Chinese called it "the Book of the Wise Man and the Fool". It was composed at the quinquennial festival, the *pancavārṣika*.[5]

Vivid contact with the writers of these translations and other books is felt in the colophons and the private letters. These idiomatic original texts, however, are not easy to interpret. Progress is none the less being made. One official dispatch[6] discloses a state of emergency when an attack by Huna is expected. In the Jātakastava there is a long final paragraph as follows:

Chang Kim-shan ordered to write this book the *Jātakastava* [the praise of the Buddha for his endurances in earlier births] a supplementary treatise of the wonderful acts of the Buddha in his desire for enlightenment. As a result of my planting this root of good merit may the emperor the world-honoured king reach the peculiar status of endless rule, a peculiar migration, a peculiar stage of life. Now too may the Diamond-ruling king have the use of long life, may he have endless long life. May the evils arising from former acts, accumulated over an age of the world, vanish. May they attain to the all-best enlightenment.

He then shares his merits with teachers and relatives and prays that he himself may attain to the prophecy that he shall become a Buddha (*bodhi-vyākaraṇa*).

A private letter of an estate-owner[7] opens with courtesy formulas as follows: "I the official Īramaña bow down to the ground before my wife. I ask after the health of the children Īrasamga 'Jade stone' and the others, also of the young and older kinsmen Jsijsīya and Vilāya and the others. I am well and in health. How otherwise, if you at home are well. I feel it an honour. For the crop you should take care that you can give water in time to the grain crops and can watch the fodder crops. Watch the cattle large and small so that they suffer no loss."[8]

[1] *Ibid.* v, 368–76. [2] Line 59. [3] *Ibid.* IV, 8.
[4] Bailey, "Buddhist Sanskrit", *JRAS* 1955, p. 18.
[5] *Texts* IV, 17. [6] *Ibid.* IV, 122. [7] *Ibid.* II, 17.
[8] Translation in *Saka Documents Text Volume*, pp. 73–4.

An important activity of the writers was the preparation of bilingual manuals. One bilingual text in Buddhist Sanskrit and the language of Khotan[1] is a long phrase-book and vocabulary to serve the traveller by question and answer and lists of related words. Thus we have a passage as follows:[2]

Are you well and in good health? Many thanks to you, I am well. What place have you come from? I have come from Gaustana-desa [Khotan]. When did you come from India? It was two years ago. Where are you staying in Gaustana-desa? I am staying in a monastery. In what monastery are you staying? Have you visited the king? I have. Now where are you going? I am going to China. What is your business in China? I wish to see the Bodhisattva Manjusrī.

There also exist a number of Chinese–Khotanese vocabularies[3] and a short Turkish–Khotanese vocabulary.[4] Chinese texts in Brāhmī Khotanese script[5] and a Tibetan letter written in Khotanese orthography[6] await further study. A Kuči–Sanskrit phrase-book has also been published.[7]

Important for the history of Khotan in the period from about A.D. 500 to A.D. 1000, which is an obscure time for this region, with only scanty Chinese and Tibetan reports, are the many official reports down to the mid 10th century, not long before the final Turkish conquest. In these documents the *haḍa* "emissaries, envoys, messengers" inform the Court of Khotan of events in which many peoples are concerned, Huna, Chinese, Tibetans, Tanguts, Cimuḍa, Supīya, Dūm, Gara and particularly the Turks.[8] The documents cannot all be fully interpreted. Other such documents remain to be translated. They are full of the names of outstanding persons and important place-names. One name is deserving of especial mention, that of the *ttaśīka-*,[9] the name *tāčīk* used in Persia of the Arabs. The royal family in Khotan had arranged marriages with the Chinese rulers in Shachū, which at this period was acting independently with its own names for the year periods.

[1] *Texts* III, 121–4. [2] Lines 9–18.

[3] *Texts* II, 1 (tr. in *Saka Documents Text Volume*, pp. 17ff); *Texts* III, 103, 136.

[4] *Ibid.* III, 81–3 (ed. with translation in Bailey, "A Turkish Khotanese Vocabulary", *BSOAS* XI (1943–6), 290–6); facsimile in Bailey, "Talamakan Miscellany", *BSOAS* XXXVI (1973), pp. 224–7; pl. 1. [5] *Texts* III, 62.

[6] *Ibid.*; tr. R. Kaneko in Bailey, "Talamakan Miscellany".

[7] V. S. Vorob'ev-Desjatovskij, *Ucenye zapiski instituta vostokovedenija* XVI, 304–8.

[8] For translations of these documents, see Bailey, "Irano-Indica", *BSOAS* XII (1948), 323; "Altun Khan", *BSOAS* XXX (1967), 95–104; "A Khotanese Text Concerning the Turks", *Asia Major* I (1949), 28–51; *Asia Major* II (1951), 43–5; *Asia Major* XI (1964–5), 1–26, 101–19; and *Saka Documents Text Volume*, pp. 1–129.

[9] *Asia Major* XI, pp. 20–1.

A private letter of thanks to a man's friends in a monastery should be cited here. It is sent to a monastery at Māhyāra, in Tibetan Mohyora;[1] it reads as follows:

My friends and my teachers, who have immeasurable merits, fair qualities and virtues, you who are learned in the Buddhist preaching, dwelling in Phema city [to the east of Khotan; in Marco Polo, Pem], illuminated by philosophy, holding to the light of understanding, lions of the Śākya family [of the Buddha], sages of knowledge, like the sun resting upon the peaks, to you the knower of two scriptures, doctor Yasaḥprajña, and to you the knower of three scriptures, doctor Punyamitra, doctor Mitraprajña, Nāgasthira, and doctor Bhadresvaramitra, to you all with my forehead at your feet I reverently send this letter.

These excerpts will serve to indicate the scope of this literature from Khotan. It is truly only a small portion of a large literary effort. Its greatest value is likely to be in the linguistic sphere where it adds largely to the knowledge of eastern Iranian, supplementing and corroborating much which was already known.

This whole literary activity indicates a remarkable cultural achievement. The possession of a vocabulary to render not only the pleasant stories and verse of the Sudhana and Rāma legends, but also to venture on philosophic texts, implies, even though much of the Buddhist vocabulary was borrowed from Buddhist Sanskrit, a long tradition of poetry and religious thought. This is revealed by the few traces of older Iranian beliefs which have been carried over into the Buddhist books. Thus the *ttaira haraysä*[2] for Buddhist Sumeru is the Avestan *taēra-* and *harā bərəz*, the modern name Alburz; the *kara-* "sea-monster"[3] is the Avestan *kara-* "fish", the Pahlavī *kar māhīk*; the word *dyūva-* "demon" corresponds to the Old Persian *daiva-*. The word *ysamaśśandai* "world" is made from *zam* "earth" and *śśanda-* equivalent of Avestan *spənta-* "constructively holy";[4] the word *balysa-*, Tumshuq *bārza-* "the possessor of the knowledge of *bodhi* 'enlightenment', the Buddha" is cognate with Old Persian *brazmaniya-*; the name *śśandrāmatā-* which translates Buddhist Sanskrit *śrī*, the *devī* "deity" of fortune is the Avestan *spənta ārmaitiš* "the beneficent benefactor the earth" and the word *phārra-* which is used of the high position, fortune of the Buddha, is the same as the Kuči Tokharian loan-word *perne*, which translates Buddhist Sanskrit *lakṣmī* "fortune". The word *kai*, plural *kā*, is used both of the *ārya-* "honoured monk"

[1] *Texts* IV, 25. [2] *Ibid.* II, 103, l. 58. [3] *Ibid.* II, 104, l. 78.

[4] See Bailey, "Saka *ssandrāmata*", in G. Wiessner (ed.), *Festschrift für Wilhelm Eilers* (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 136–43.

and of the *rrispūra* "princes" and is the ancient word *kavi-*, familiar in the Avesta and the oldest Indian tradition. Thus the older traditions were partly saved by transformation into the new religious terminology.

Khotan had haḍ early in the Buddhist period in Central Asia importance as the centre from which these Indian ideas were disseminated throughout Asia. To Khotan, scholars came from China to receive and study the new faith. In Tokharian Saka words testify to the cultural pre-eminence of Khotan before the 7th century.

CHAPTER 35

KHWARAZMIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Chorasmia, one of the provinces of the Achaemenian Empire (*Huwā-razmiš*), which provided a "dark blue stone" (turquoise?) to adorn the palace of Darius at Susa, yet receives only a late mention by name in the Zoroastrian scriptures (Yasht x. 14, *X^vāirizəm*). Many scholars, for various reasons,[1] have explained this apparent eclipse of a flourishing country by declaring that Chorasmia was a part of the very heartland of the early Iranians, the *airyanəm vaējō* "Aryan range" of the Avesta, later *Ērānwēz* of the Pahlavī books. Be that as it may, no word identified as Old Chorasmian has been preserved for us, apart from the name itself. Even the meaning of this is still disputed,[2] though meaning it clearly has if we accept that the final element *-zmī* contains the word for "land", Persian *zamīn*. One explanation which has not yet been seriously advanced is that the beginning of the name, **Hwāra-*, may have been the ancestor of Persian *kh^vār* "abject", Kurdish *khwār* "down, low", that in effect Chorasmia meant "Netherland". Such a name would well fit the lands lying around and between the lower reaches of the rivers Oxus and Jaxartes, today the oasis of Khiva and the Qizil Qum desert, and ending on Shelley's

> lone Chorasmian shore...a wide and melancholy waste
> of putrid marshes.

(It is perhaps significant that one of the lowest-lying towns on the Jaxartes, or Saiḥūn, was known to the Arab geographers as Khuwāra.)

Things are not much better when we come to the long Middle Ages of Chorasmia, from the successor state of the Achaemenians till the Arab invasion (8th century A.D.). Although many coins, inscriptions on clay and silver vessels, and documents on wood and leather have been excavated in the last four decades by Soviet archaeologists, very few have so far been satisfactorily published. At least it is clear that all these texts are written in a script derived, like those of the indigenous Parthian

[1] E. Benveniste, "L'Erān-vēž et l'origine légendaire des Iraniens", *BSOS* VII (1934), p. 268.

[2] O. Szemerényi, "Iranica II", *Die Sprache* XII (Vienna, 1966), pp. 194ff.

and Sogdian of Chorasmia's neighbour lands, from the Aramaic script which had pervaded all the territories of the Persian Empire. There seem to have been two periods of Chorasmian assertiveness, in this matter of writing the mother tongue, viz. at the beginning of the 3rd century A.D., just before the conquest by Ardashīr and Shāpūr, the first Sasanian emperors, and again in the second half of the 7th century and the first of the 8th, until perhaps some decades after the second, crushing punitive incursion of the Arab commander Quṭaiba in 712 A.D.[1] From this latter period date the funerary inscriptions on about a hundred ossuaries, of stone, alabaster or clay, discovered at Toq-qalʿa (14 km. N.W. of Nukus). Though imperfectly preserved, these are sufficiently repetitive to make the readings fairly certain. A specimen reads:[2]

BŠNT vii C vi YRḤ'
βrwrtn BYWM βrwrtn ZNH tpnkwk
NPŠY 'y srwywk tyšy'n'nw 'rw'n
ʿD hy'n' 'y 'rw'n ʿL nwš γrδm'n
m'ny''ty

'In the year 706, month
Fravartin, day Fravartin. This chest
is that of the soul of Srawyōk, son of Tīšyān,
may their souls in the eternal paradise
rest.'

As in all Iranian languages using the Aramaic script, ideograms (transliterated here in capital letters) still conceal a number of indigenous words, and even those spelt "phonetically" may in fact enshrine an earlier pronunciation, though there is no contemporary evidence to prove this.

Fortunately, although the advent of Islam put paid to this archaic scribal tradition, it by no means destroyed the language or the national feeling of the people. In the first five centuries of Islam the land of Khwārazm produced many fine scholars, notably the 3rd/9th century mathematician Abū ʿAbd-Allāh Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Khwārazmī, whose name has survived in the term "algorism" and whose book *al-Jabr* gave us "algebra". Of greater renown was Abū Raiḥān Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Bairūnī, or Bīrūnī (362–443/973–1051), the Erasmus of those distant Netherlands, eminent in mathematics, astronomy, geography and the natural sciences. To him we owe the first traces of Late

[1] Livshitz, "Khwarezmian calendar", p. 440.
[2] Henning, "Chorasmian Documents", p. 179.

Chorasmian (or Khwārazmian, as we may fitly call it), in the lists of calendar and astronomical terms recorded, in a modified form of the Arabo-Persian script, in his *al-Āthār al-bāqiya* ("Chronology of Ancient Nations"). For example, the name of the first month (and 19th day), which we have met above as *βrwrtn*, he gives as *rwcn* (or *rwrcn*?), i.e. /rawa(r)cina/ from **frawartinām*, and the word for "night" in the characteristic form *'xyb*, i.e. /əxxéba/ from *xšap-*, Pers. *shab*. (In this transcription *c* stands for *ts*, *x* for *kh*, *ə-* a prosthetic vowel of unknown quality, and *e* possibly any short front vowel between *ä* and *i*.)

It is not until two centuries later, however, that we come to the main body of Khwārazmian. This is scanty enough, but survives in the convenient form of a dictionary, or rather the glosses in some manuscripts of the great Arabic dictionary, *Muqaddimat al-adab*, by another Khwārazmian scholar, Abu'l-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī (467–538/1075–1144). So far only one such manuscript has been published, in facsimile. The interpretation of the glosses it contains is bedevilled by the fact that at the beginning many of the letters are unpointed, leaving us to guess whether, e.g., *b*, *p*, *t*, *θ* (*th*), *n*, or *y* was meant. Clearly the scribe was a Khwārazmian, with no need of such props, but the occasional mistaken translations of the Arabic words show that the manuscript is not an autograph of Zamakhsharī, as was once hoped. At the end of the manuscript, on the other hand, there is rather a superabundance of points to the letters, perhaps by a second hand. In general, however, it is possible to reduce the area of uncertainty by comparing similar glosses. A language with a rich complement of consonants emerges, having, in addition to the normal Arabo-Persian alphabet (with *θ* and *δ* representing the same sounds *th*, *dh* as in Arabic) letters for *c* (*ts*, and probably also *dz*) and *β* (triple-pointed *f*, for *v* as distinct from *w*). The letter *g*, though certainly common, is only once pointed and no vowel qualities are reliably indicated at all. We are thus obliged to *transliterate* the skeleton of Khwārazmian, any flesh we may add by way of transcription being little more than an artistic impression.

Two peculiarities in the use of the Arabic script stand out. One is the confusion between *n* and *y*, the same word often being pointed with either, or even both, e.g. *βndk* ~ *βydk* "slave", suggesting a pronunciation /βẽdek/ from *bandaka-*, Pers. *banda*. The indication of final *n* is also very flexible, e.g. *δy*(*n*) /δẽ/ "woman" from *daēnu-*. More striking is the spelling out, generally by the letter *y*, of the vowel before the last consonant of a word when it is in pause (i.e. at the end of a

sentence), indicating either lengthening or stressing of the vowel, e.g. *βndyk* /βĕdék/, and the imperative *xwyr* /xwéra/ "eat!" from *xwara*. This changing stress pattern must have existed already in Old Chorasmian. Other vowels, unwritten in final position, reappear before suffixes, e.g. *c'yt* /cāyta/ but *c'yt'w* /cāytā-wa/ "he entered (therein)".

Even in its skeletal form, we can of course observe a great deal about the history of the sounds of the language (and so of its affiliations) and much of its grammatical structure. A mere list of the "sound laws" which have operated to make Khwārazmian what it is would far exceed the space available here and a few characteristic examples must suffice. The most obvious changes, marking the language clearly as Eastern Iranian, are of initial *b*, *d*, *g* into *β*, δ, *γ*, and of medial *ft*, *xt* into *βd*, *γd*: *cf.* *βndk*, *δy(n)* above, and *γwx* "ear", Sogdian *γwš*, Pers *gūsh*; *'βd* "seven", as in Sogdian, to Pers. *haft*, and *δγd* "daughter", Sogdian *δwγt'*, both /δuγda/, Pers. *dukhtar*. Many other changes are as odd as the *x* from *š* in *γwx*, besides *mwf* "mouse", Pers. *mūsh*, and *'mh* "ewe", Pers. *mīsh*. Some seem to show a mixture of different strains in the language, or at least some borrowing of vocabulary, *e.g.* *šy* (as in Sogdian) "three", but *hrδys* "thirteen" (*cf.* Parthian *hry* "three"). Nevertheless, Khwārazmian is obviously "at home" between Parthian on the west and Sogdian to the east.

For significant grammatical features we must look first at the verb. Notable here is the preservation, in all tenses, of *r*-endings for the third person plural, *e.g.* *hβr'r* "(if) they give", *'β'r* "they may be", *mk'r* "they did" (stem *'k*-): elsewhere in Iranian such endings occur only in Avestan, Saka, and (late Sogdian) Yaghnōbī. Khwārazmian also goes with Sogdian in keeping and developing the old augment as a mark of the imperfect tense. It appears either as a lengthened vowel in the verbal stem, e.g. *h'βr'r* "they gave" (*cf.* Sogd. /θāβar-and/ to stem /θβar-/ "give"), or as the prefix *m*- generalized before stems beginning with a vowel, e.g. *mβ'r* "they were" (similarly Sogd. /māβar-and/ "they brought" to stem /āβar-/). The most striking feature, however, is the accumulation of suffixes, generally to the verb, which is extraordinary for Iranian. The suffixes may be pronominal, adverbial, or represent prepositions, and appear in combinations up to four at a time: e.g. *c'yt'-w* "entered-there", *c'ytyθ* /cāyta-(h)i-θa/ "-him-with", *c'yt'-hy-w'-br* "-him-there-upon", *hyδd'-hy-n'-d'-br* "he read-him-them-out-upon", i.e. "recited them before him". The possible combinations are almost endless and the underlying syntax complicated. We may

further note that Khwārazmian has a distinct definite article, masculine *'y* /i/, feminine *y'* /yā/, derived from the old relative pronoun *ya-*, similarly used in Avestan, and that nouns show as many as three case forms in the singular, combining with prepositions to distinguish five cases.

What survives of Khwārazmian? Apart from the dictionary glosses already mentioned, short phrases or sentences seldom more complicated than, e.g., "the horse ran", "he led the camels back from the water", "he could not restrain himself from saying such-and-such", the only material known comprises rather less than 400 sentences, or parts of sentences, quoted in a series of Arabic legal books, chief among them the *Qunyat al-munya* (*c.* 660/1260). These snippets are "highly idiomatic, often slangy, full of puns and double meanings, which are difficult to grasp unless one is already thoroughly acquainted with the language. These sentences come from case law; they are sentences actually used in life, which subsequently acquired significance in a law suit."[1] Few are of the formality of, say, "I have given you my daughter for 100 dinars marriage-portion" or "If a Khwārazmian says (to his slave), out of kindness, in Turkish, 'My brave lad,' and if he intends nothing whatever by his kindness (in the way of acknowledging the slave as his 'son'), does manumission arise from that word?" Most are more or less casual remarks (nonetheless grist to the lawyers' mills) like, "Rent us this garden. – As you will", "Whenever you come I'll give you a dinar", "Don't mumble!", "Swear all the oaths you want!".

Unguarded remarks, however actionable, and ossuary inscriptions, in Late and Middle Chorasmian respectively, are but meagre remnants of a language and scarcely merit the name of literature. But what of Old Chorasmian? One noticeable fact about Khwārazmian is the closeness of some of its vocabulary to Avestan. Though yet to be evaluated statistically, this seems to be more than mere chance. For example, Khwārazmian alone has preserved, hardly changed for nearly two millennia, the forms and meaning of Avestan *kaxᵛarəδa-* "sorcerer" in *kxrzy-'wc* "divination", *ṭkaēša-* "false doctrine" in *čkyš* "a lie", the **karap-* of *karapan-* "a priest (hostile to Zoroaster)" in the stem *krb-* "to mumble", *vərəzənya-* (i.e. /wrzanya-/) "neighbour" in *'wžnyk* /užanek/, and so on. This is far from proving that Khwārazmian is the direct descendant of an Avestan dialect, but if we recall Henning's

[1] Henning, "The structure of the Khwarezmian verb", *Asia Major* v (1956), p. 43.

hypothesis that the Gathas, the oldest part of the Avesta, "were composed in the neighbourhood of Marv and Herat", then part of the pre-Achaemenian state of Chorasmia,[1] it is perhaps permissible to consider that some Chorasmian literature has come down to us after all, in the shape of those same hymns.

[1] Henning, *Zoroaster, politician or witch-doctor?* (Oxford, 1951), pp. 43 ff.

CHAPTER 36

BACTRIAN LITERATURE

The study of Bactrian literature, under this name, has only recently emerged from adolescence. There is little text-material, and even it is largely elusive. On much of it no opinion has as yet been expressed that would help to place it within the pan-Iranian context of the present volume. Inevitably, therefore, many views here offered are personal. This is true especially in respect of the main Bactrian text, the Nokonzok inscription, on which the present writer is alone in print with an overall assessment.[1]

The notion that Bactrian was the language of the Avesta had rightly fallen into discredit by the end of the 19th century. This left the term inapplicable to any known language until 1960, when W. B. Henning identified as Bactrian the language of a Greek-letter inscription discovered three years earlier on Bactrian soil by the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan.[2] The inscription was carved in the 2nd century A.D. into a beautiful monolith placed at the entrance of the temple-acropolis of Baghlan at Surkh Kotal, situated at some 25 miles south-west of the present-day town of Baghlan, and approximately 100 miles south-east of where the capital city of Bactra had once stood. The inscription, which consists of some 180 words supplying a vocabulary of about 100, deserves to be named after its main protagonist, Nokonzok, described in it as a high dignitary holding the

[1] "The Well of Baghlan"; "Bactrian Inscriptions"; the revised assessment written for this chapter has meanwhile been printed separately under the title "Nokonzok's Well" in Afghan Studies II (London, 1979), pp. 55–73; it is to the effect that the discrepancy between the colophons attached to an unvarying main text in each of the three versions of the inscription, points to the well which the main text claims Nokonzok built in order to forestall the evacuation of the Kanishka sanctuary of Baghlan, not being the well actually excavated, opposite which stood the final version, while inside it the two earlier versions were found discarded; it would follow that the well which Nokonzok wanted was never dug, and the existing well, situated where Nokonzok never envisaged one, was dug after his death as a memorial to him; and to make the memorial appear a fulfilment of his intentions, the wording in which he had couched them was re-engraved without change opposite it, as the main text of the final version. The text of the final version was first published by Maricq, that of the two earlier versions discarded inside the well, by Benveniste (see bibliography).

[2] Henning, "Bactrian inscription", p. 47, where the Bactrian language is described as "occupying an intermediary position between Pashto and Yidgha-Munji on the one hand, Sogdian, Khwarezmian and Parthian on the other".

office of "Lord of the Marches" (*kanārang*) in the year 31, which year fell early in the reign of the Kushān emperor Huviška.

Huviška himself, his predecessor Vajheṣka (pronounced Vāziška), and the latter's predecessor the celebrated Kaniška, all bore names which noteworthily end in *-iška*. By showing that this ending makes sense of the three names only within a phonetic development characteristic of the language he had recognized as Bactrian, Henning achieved the identification of the mother-tongue of the Kushān rulers as being itself Bactrian.[1] The ancestors of the rulers may nevertheless have been, as is common opinion, Sakas. They would be members of a family which in time emerged from among the nomadic Sakas who in about 135 B.C., more than two centuries before the accession of Kaniška, invaded Bactria and adopted its culture after abolishing Greek rule, to which the country had by then been subjected for just under two centuries since Alexander's invasion.

The Nokonzok inscription shows that in the 2nd century A.D. Bactrian was a Middle Iranian language. It had probably reached the Middle Iranian stage two or three centuries earlier in common with Persian and other Iranian languages. The Old Iranian stage of Bactrian is not attested. That was the stage at which the language must have been when in 519 B.C. Darius claimed Bactria as one of his provinces and even earlier, in pre-Achaemenian time, when in the words of an Avestan text the country was "beautiful Bactria with raised banners", a description that would suit a breakaway country, broken away, perhaps, from the Chorasmian empire.[2] Thus for some centuries preceding Alexander's invasion, an Old Bactrian literature is likely to have existed, at least oral. But was there writing?

In Achaemenian times already in the 5th century B.C., correspondence in writing, both between Iranians and between Iranians and non-Iranians, was conducted in Aramaic. The scribes wrote in Aramaic language while being dictated to in Iranian; and to Iranians they read out in Iranian language from documents written in Aramaic under Iranian or non-Iranian dictation. Aramaic letters exchanged in Achaemenian times between Persians have survived. In their case the "governing" language, from which and into which the Aramaic was translated, was Persian. It would have been Parthian when Aramaic served as "vehicle" language for correspondence between Parthians; Sogdian

[1] "Surkh Kotal and Kaniska", p. 84.
[2] See W. B. Henning, *Zoroaster, Politician or Witch-doctor?* (Oxford, 1951), pp. 42ff.

if the correspondence was between Sogdians; Chorasmian if it was between Chorasmians; Bactrian if the correspondents were Bactrians.

Such literature was hitherto thought to be adequately defined as the work of Aramaic scribes who were mentally translating both while they wrote and while they read out. The present writer differs, in that he considers this definition, though accurate in respect of scribal practice, as missing the essence, namely the view which the Iranian employers of the Aramaic scribes were bound to take of the records they were causing the latter to write and read out to them. They can only have viewed them as records of *Iranian* speech. It is we who, because we neither dictated the Aramaic records in question, nor hear them read out as the ancient Iranians did, have been beguiled by their appearance into taking them at their Aramaic face value. The deceptiveness of the face emerges from the fact that in the days of Darius the Persians used not only Aramaic, but alternatively Elamite as vehicle language for writing. The latter is likely to have been the first language they so used, because when the as yet illiterate Persians arrived in Persis to make that country their homeland it was an Elamite population they found there and gradually assimilated, among whom literacy had by then been thriving for many centuries.

This method of writing Iranian[1] may be termed alloglottography, and defined as the use of one writable language for writing another. Of Persian we may say within this definition that it was a language first written elamographically, subsequently also aramaeographically. The latter method came to prevail, and had virtually ousted the former by the middle of the 5th century B.C. as a result of Aramaic scribes happening to be available throughout the vast multilingual Achaemenian empire. Their ubiquity made it possible for aramaeographed, Persian-dictated messages to be read out to addressees in, say, Egypt or Lydia in the latter's own, Egyptian or Lydian language, and their aramaeographed replies, dictated in Egyptian or Lydian language, to be read out straight in Persian to Persian recipients of them, indeed to any recipient in his own language so long as he had at his disposal an Aramaic scribe conversant with it.

To serve such international purpose the Aramaic used as vehicle had of course to conform to standard rules of correct Aramaic grammar and syntax, true to its being a *scripta lingua franca*. For in each country of the

[1] For a discussion in greater detail see "The alloglottography of Old Persian", *TPS* 1979, pp. 114–90.

empire Aramaic scribes would usually be familiar with only that country's language, in addition to their own. They would therefore risk being defeated by incoming messages whose aramaeography had suffered from concessions, syntactic or lexical, to governing languages of which they knew nothing.

But after the collapse and fragmentation of the Achaemenian empire, each of its former provinces that was Iranian would soon become the almost exclusive area within which anybody read aramaeographs of its native language; and the writing of these would increasingly have been executed no longer by Aramaeans, but by natives who never used Aramaic in speech, since they learnt it in scribal schools for no other purpose than to write in it their own language. The Aramaic they wrote, being a graphic vehicle required for communication between speakers no longer of different languages but only of one, just as centuries earlier the only language alloglottographed in Elamite was Persian, had no chance to withstand indefinitely, just as Elamite had been unable indefinitely to withstand, encroachments on it by the language it served, in the form of infiltration of words spelt phonetically instead of aramaeographically, the affixation of phonetic complements,[1] the adoption of the governing language's word order.

From the live language as which it was treated when first acting as vehicle, Aramaic thus turned, slightly differently in the case of each of several Middle Iranian languages, into a mere set of graphic symbols, one for each word of the governing language. The symbols, whose graphic constitution was memorized at school, were put down mechanically as the words of the governing language fell in speech or thought, except that some of these words, or endings of theirs, were increasingly written phonetically, in script still Aramaic, but in language Iranian. The aramaeography of Iranian, from being what the present writer calls alloglottography, had become what is generally known as ideography. And just as the Aramaic word-forms which were adopted as symbols of Iranian words were apt to differ according to Iranian province and language, so also the shapes of the Aramaic letters, once their uniformity throughout the former Achaemenian empire lost its *raison d'être*, gradually underwent sufficient local differentiation for the Persian, the

[1] Such as in English, for instance, are *-st* and *-nd* added to the symbols, arabograms as it were, of words pronounced "one" and "two" (the addition, incidentally, having the effect of which examples abound in Iranian Aramaeography once it turned into ideography, of the symbols themselves switching to very different phonetic values, in the above instances from "one" to "fir" and from "two" to "sec").

Parthian, the Sogdian, and the Chorasmian languages to come to be written each in its own variant of the Aramaic script.[1]

There is no reason to doubt, even though no records are available to confirm this, that in Achaemenian antiquity Aramaic alloglottography was practised also in Bactria, so that Bactrians would already then have thought of their language as not infrequently being committed to writing. This should have led in post-Achaemenian times to Middle Bactrian being written with Aramaic ideograms in Aramaic script in parallel with Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian, Chorasmian. It did not, or if it did, only on a small scale.[2] The reason must lie in the fact that in Bactria, unlike in the homelands of the other languages we have listed, the Macedonian occupation instead of soon collapsing to make room for a resumption of Iranian traditions, ushered in two centuries of Greek domination. Under it any inherited form of literacy would soon have been put out of business; for the Greek administrators had no use for written correspondence conducted in Aramaic alloglottography from which in time a Bactrian writing system in Aramaic script, ideographic at first, might have developed, ultimately perhaps turning phonetic.[3] It would be absurd to expect Greeks to run Bactrian affairs in any language or script other than their own. In the city on the Aï Khanum site Greek inscriptions were actually set up in public places. In what language would ambitious Bactrians in such circumstances be more likely to have had their sons trained to read and write, than in Greek?

The writing of Greek in Bactria was of course not alloglottographic; no spoken Bactrian lies behind it as governing language, for alloglottography practised by scribes bilingual – which scribes writing ideographically do not need to be – was in Iran a means of recording

[1] Although the variation in script and choice of ideograms points to isolation from each other of the scribal schools of different provinces, in the 2nd century B.C. there was still some interprovincial contact between schools: see Henning, "Mitteliranisch", 34, whose treatment of Aramaic ideography in Iranian, pp. 30–40 and *passim*, is fundamental. That will nevertheless have been the century in which the transition from alloglottography to ideography took place. It is poorly documented, while the same transition, centuries earlier, with Elamite as vehicle language is observable in plenty of texts from the reigns of Darius (521–486 B.C.) and Xerxes (486–465).

[2] The only piece of Bactrian perhaps so written which has hitherto been found, a solitary fragment of a text inscribed in Aramaic letters on an ostracon, comes from the Hellenistic city on the site of Aï Khanum. The language of the fragment may be, to quote V. A. Livshitz ("Nadpisi iz Dil'berdzhina", p. 165a), "Aramaic or Bactrian". If in fact it turns out to be aramaeographed Bactrian one would expect the text to have been written at an early period of Greek domination, in the 3rd century B.C.

[3] In Sogdian script, for example, by the 8th century A.D. relatively few words were still written ideographically, though among them are some of the commonest conjunctions and prepositions.

the language of masters, not of servants. Once in the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom the Achaemenian alloglottographic tradition had broken down, the Bactrian language would have reverted to uncommittability to writing. We may think of it during the two centuries of Greek rule as leading the underprivileged existence of a native language confined to speech, much as later New Persian did during the first two centuries after the Arab conquest: as the conquerors had no use for the Pahlavi script, the conquered, other than persecuted Zoroastrian minorities, lost literacy in Persian and strove for Arabic literacy instead, until they moved on to adopt the Arabic script as a means for resuming the committal to writing of Persian, phonetically this time from the start, not allo(= arabo)glottographically, as part of their emancipation from their masters.

Accordingly, at the time of the Saka invasion of Bactria in about 135 B.C. Bactrians not illiterate will as a rule have been literate exclusively in Greek. It was only when their own language began to regain status in circumstances leading to a resumption of Iranian rule, that literate Bactrians would have been driven to the logical step of adapting the alphabet in which they read and wrote Greek, to the writing also of Bactrian.

The Bactrian orthography in Greek letters of the Nokonzok inscription is fairly rigid. It will therefore have been of long standing by the 2nd century A.D. But the above considerations, as well as the palaeographic one presently to be adduced, suggest that it was an orthography devised only after the Saka invasion of 135 B.C.

On this reasoning the recording of Bactrian in Greek script will have begun in the 1st century B.C., at a time when Greek literacy was still sufficiently widespread among Bactrians to render the extension of the Greek script to their own language both natural and easy, and discourage the adoption for Bactrian of one of the Irano-Aramaic scripts instead.[1] There would follow for Bactrians a period of bilingual literacy, Greek and Bactrian, the Greek alphabet serving both. In Bactria, or Tokharistan as the country was coming to be called, many of the demoted Greeks will have shared in it, as most of them presumably spoke Bactrian. With them biliteracy would continue for so long as they retained their own, Greek, identity. They will generally have

[1] This dating differs from G. Morgenstierne's, who suggested that Bactrian had had no continued tradition in Greek script before the time of the Nokonzok inscription; "Notes on Bactrian phonology", *BSOAS* XXXIII (1970), p. 127.

retained it until long after the majority of literate Bactrians had shed, of their own ancestors' Greek literacy, all but the script in which they wrote Bactrian.[1]

If the language of the Nokonzok inscription is Bactrian, one may call Bactrian, allowing for evolution and dialect variation, also the language of the other bits of Iranian writing extant in Greek script usually cursive, some known since before 1960, others of more recent discovery, the distribution of which ranges from a site in Bactria itself, Dilberjin (*c.* 25 miles north-west of Balkh), to regions where after the establishment of the Kushān empire the presence of speakers of Bactrian would not be surprising. Unfortunately our understanding of most of these texts, which are often mere fragments, or poorly preserved, is dim. Some of them, however, do contain words and morphemes which occur in the Nokonzok inscription. Such writings used to be referred to as "Hephthalite" in pre-1960 publications, on account of their cursive Greek script resembling that of the Hephthalite coin legends.

In Afghanistan we have cursive Bactrian inscriptions from the north (Dilberjin), the centre (Jagatū) and the south-east (Uruzgān); in Pakistan, from the Tochi valley not far from the Afghan frontier (south-west of Bannu); across the Oxus on Soviet territory from near Tirmidh and, in former Sogdiana, from the Samarqand region; in Central Asia seven manuscript fragments come from the Turfan area in Chinese Turkestan, one of which is almost certainly of Buddhist contents,[2] and one comes from the Lou-Lan region, in the ancient kingdom of Kroraina.

The dates of these cursively written texts are hard to ascertain, except for the Tochi ones, dated in the 9th century A.D.; the seven fragments from Turfan may belong to the 7th to 9th centuries, the one from Lou-Lan and the inscriptions at Tirmidh and Dilberjin to the 4th or 3rd. The script must be the one to which the Chinese traveller Hsüan-tsang referred when he reported in A.D. 629 from his visit to Tokharistan that the number of letters with which the inhabitants write their language, from left to right, is 25. In this total no doubt the letter we call "san" was included, written þ, the only one which the Bactrians added to the Greek alphabet, to express the sound *š*.

[1] For the continuing attestation in Bactria of writing in Greek language after the 1st century A.D., the writers presumably being Greeks, cf. Livshitz, "Nadpisi iz Dil'berdzhina", p. 165 with n. 12a. The Greek legends on Kushān coins, being confined to traditional titulature, need not reflect a living use by Bactrians of the Greek language.

[2] Gershevitch, "Bactrian Inscriptions", p. 40, n. 18 and Livshitz, "Kotkrytiyu baktriskix nadpisei", p. 62.

Palaeographically the Bactrian cursive script is thought to derive from the monumental script found in the inscriptions of Surkh Kotal, on a clay-dish at Tirmidh,[1] and on Kushān coins, as well as in the Bactrian version of a trilingual inscription of the early Kushān period carved into a boulder on Mount Qarabayu in the Dašt-i Nāvur (appr. 30 miles west of Ghazni).[2] The monumental script in its turn is thought to derive from the particular variety used in Iran of the cursive Greek script, the earliest attestation of which occurs in a document of the 1st century B.C. recovered from Avromān in western Iran. We have here an additional reason for not dating the emergence of Graeco-Bactrian orthography, however traditional it looks in the Nokonzok inscription, before the 1st century B.C.

The contents of Bactrian texts in Greek script other than the Nokonzok inscription are insufficiently clear for consideration in this chapter. But what deserves mention is the fact that, while as stated above at least one of the Central Asian Bactrian fragments in Greek script appears to be Buddhist, we also have, again from the Turfan area and again datable at a guess in the 7th to 9th centuries A.D., one single, precious fragment of a Manichean Bactrian text written in script not Greek, but Manichean.[3]

The two religious fragments constitute but minimal evidence, but it is evidence warranting a far-reaching conclusion: the trade centres of Central Asia, i.e. Chinese Turkestan, must have harboured Bactrian colonies consisting of descendants of émigrés from Bactria, just as we know these centres to have harboured Sogdian colonies from at least the 4th century A.D. onward; and in their respective colonies the literary activities of Bactrians and Sogdians must have proceeded *pari passu*.

We are well acquainted with the writing habits of the Central Asian Sogdians. For lay purposes they continued to use the Sogdian script as it had evolved from the Aramaic in their homeland of Sogdiana. Religious texts were also written in it, but *invariably* in it only by

[1] See Livshitz, "Nadpisi iz Dil'berdzhina", p. 166, n. 17.

[2] Edited by G. Fussman in "Documents épigraphiques Kouchans" and datable in his opinion to 32 A.D. and in the opinion of A. D. H. Bivar, "The Kuṣāna trilingual", *BSOAS* XXXIX (1976), pp. 333–40, to fifty years later. An unfinished inscription, earlier than the Nokonzok inscription but also found on the Surkh Kotal site, bears the same date as the inscription of Dašt-i Nāvur.

[3] Cf. Henning, "Bactrian Inscription", p. 55, n. 8, and M. Boyce, *A Catalogue of the Iranian manuscripts in Manichean script* (Berlin, 1960), p. 150, no. 92. The contents of this text were described by the present writer in a paper still awaiting publication, read out at the International Conference of Central Asian Studies held in Budapest in March 1976.

Buddhists; Sogdian Manichees preferred to write their religious texts in Manichean script, Sogdian Christians in Syriac script. Both probably were doing so by the 6th century, if not earlier. In both these scripts the writers wrote Sogdian phonetically, breaking with the traditional orthography by then partly historical and still retentive of a number of Aramaic ideograms (see above, p. 1254, n. 3), which continued to be adhered to when Sogdian was being written in its own, Sogdian script. By comparing the phonetic spellings in Manichean and Syriac scripts with the historical spellings in Sogdian script (which themselves, at an earlier period, had been phonetic) we gain valuable information about the changes which the Sogdian language underwent during the more than one thousand years of its Middle Iranian period.

A similar distribution of scripts, to judge from the two religious Turfan fragments, must have obtained among the Central Asian Bactrians. They too continued to write their language in the script, Greek in their case, which the original émigrés had brought from the homeland. They no doubt used it for everyday lay purposes, but with them, too, it was Buddhists who wrote in it, and presumably in no other script, the religious texts of their faith. Bactrian Manichees, by contrast, like their Sogdian brethren, wrote their religious texts in the Manichean script, though perhaps also not invariably. No Christian texts have so far come to light in Bactrian language. But if and when any are found, they will be likely to display Bactrian written in Syriac script, much to our advantage.[1] For the extant Manichean fragment shows a phonetic spelling more instructive than even Manichean Sogdian, as the Manichean alphabet was better equipped than the Greek for rendering the Bactrian consonantal system.

Thus the one Bactrian fragment of almost certainly Buddhist contents, and the single Manichean fragment, entitle us to suppose that a whole religious literature in Middle Bactrian language, Buddhist and Manichean, was once current in Central Asia, the Buddhist works emanating perhaps from the monasteries of Bāmiyān in the Bactrian homeland. In time lucky finds may be expected to bring to light substantial remains of Bactrian writings belonging to both these faiths.

[1] Persian Christians in Central Asia also used for their language the Syriac script, but not as an independent tool for writing their language, let alone writing it phonetically; their orthography slavishly follows that of Pahlavi.

PART IX

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Most chapters present in their introductory parts a survey and analysis of their respective sources.

Chapter 37 surveys the sources for the study of the period under review, with comments and qualitative remarks, in order to furnish the reader with panoramic view of them. This survey is amplified by the detailed sectional bibliographies, which follow the order of the chapters. Sectional bibliographies vary in style of presentation: some are annotated, some are divided according to subject, date or the language in which the sources are written, and yet others divide the sources into primary and secondary, as the case may require; all of them provide the details of the publications referred to in the footnotes and all encompass an adequate selection of the publications that researchers may require. Most aim at a comprehensive, some even at an exhaustive listing of the relevant sources.

A list of some frequently recurring works with the details of their publication precedes the sectional bibliographies; details of their publication have not been repeated further. Editor.

CHAPTER 37

SOURCES OF PARTHIAN AND SASANIAN HISTORY

I. PARTHIAN HISTORY

It is a well-known fact that Parthian history is extremely difficult to handle in a satisfactory way. This is chiefly due to the character of our sources. In no other period of Iranian history do we find such a lack of indigenous historical texts. Contemporary records from the Parthian empire are scarce and later oriental historians had only a very dim notion of this period.

As to the classical sources we regret above all the loss of the Parthian histories written by Arrian and Apollodorus of Artemita as well as the fact that the universal history written by Pompeius Trogus has survived only in the rather poor epitome compiled by Justin. Of all this rich material only fragments are left.

In the following survey a distinction is made between *remains* and *traditions*.

1. *Remains*

Remains can be divided into non-textual and textual. The *non-textual remains* comprise first of all the countryside itself, with its ruins of buildings and fortifications, bridges and canals, as well as archaeological finds. For the reconstruction of history these remains are highly valuable from several points of view. Topographical studies have often been neglected in political history, and even more in the history of war-techniques. Such investigations must of course be combined with the study of place-names. For Parthian history we may refer to the researches of Minorsky concerning the Roman campaigns in Atropatene[1]. His investigations are important also for the Sasanian period.

The non-textual remains supplement and correct on many points the information obtained from the texts. They make history concrete and alive, because they show us how people, especially in the higher classes, and above all among kings and rulers, lived in those distant days. They also enable us far better than any texts to analyse fortifi-

[1] V. Minorsky, "Roman and Byzantine campaigns in Atropatene", *BSOAS* XI (1944), pp. 243–65.

cation systems, general architecture, as well as cult-centres and temples, housing and clothing, weapons and armour. They demonstrate *ad oculos* the commercial relations and the cultural influences that generally followed merchants and travellers. Excellent illustrations of this fact are furnished by the excavations carried out in the Parthian frontier fortress of Dura-Europos,[1] and in the desert fortress of Hatra,[2] both in the western part of the Parthian empire. From the eastern parts we have the equally splendid results achieved at Kūh-i Khwāja,[3] Surkh Kotal[4] and Taxila.[5]

Coins with their legends constitute the transition from non-textual to textual remains. The Parthian coins are of the utmost value for establishing the correct sequence of rulers and for giving us a reliable basis of chronology.

The *textual remains* include inscriptions, parchments, papyri, and ostraca in a number of languages and scripts.[6] As to inscriptions, monuments going back to the Parthian Great Kings have as yet been found only in one case, the king Gōtarz.[7] Of local dynasts, satraps, and city communities we have more remains, some of considerable importance. They include inscriptions in Greek from the satrap Gotarzes, who was later to become a Parthian ruler, and two inscriptions from Susa, one of them to be connected with the Parthian ruler Artabān III (properly II)[8]. In Aramaic we have first of all the inscriptions of the local dynast of Elymais from Tang-i Sarvak, then a memorial inscription (with a Greek version) in honour of a Georgian princess, mentioning the high administrative title *bitaxš*, and several inscriptions from Hatra, Assur and Dura. Investigation of the real linguistic character of the Georgian inscription has shewn that it is in reality written in Parthian, the Aramaic forms and words being used as ideograms. We have from the very last years of the empire an interesting inscription in the Parthian language, left by the satrap of Susa.[9]

Outside the Parthian empire, but of great importance for the cultural

[1] *Excavations at Dura-Europos. Preliminary Report* I–IX (1929–52), and *Final Report* (in course of publication).

[2] F. Safar, *Sumer* VII (1951), and following years; W. Andrae, *Hatra* (Leipzig, 1908, 1912).

[3] E. Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East* (New York, 1941).

[4] D. Schlumberger, *JA* 1952, 1954, 1955; A. Maricq, *JA* 1958; W. B. Henning, *BSOAS* XVIII (1956), 66–7; XXIII (1960), 47–55; *ZDMG* CVX (1965), 75–87; see also bibliography to chapter 36.

[5] Cf. J. Marshall, *Taxila* I–II (1951).

[6] *CIIr*, the publication of which began in 1955, aims to publish all such remains in Iranian languages up to the end of the Safarid period.

[7] See chapter 2, pp. 43 ff.

[8] Cf. p. 688 in this volume.

[9] See Henning, "Mitteliranisch" for a discussion of the Parthian inscriptions.

and religious aspects of Parthian times we have the inscriptions left by the Iranian kings of Commagene, now far better known than before.[1] From Edessa and its dependencies we possess some early inscriptions in Syriac, here and there yielding a detail of importance to Parthian history.

Of parchments and papyri Dura has presented us with a rich collection, of which the so-called Dura-parchment is extremely valuable, because it provides us with a juridical document and also gives us some insight into Parthian administrative practice. This document is written in Edessene Syriac.[2] Documents from Avroman, written partly in Greek and partly in Parthian, are important chiefly in respect of financial affairs.[3] Of much greater importance are about two thousand ostraca brought to light at Nisā, a Parthian administrative centre. These give us some knowledge of the administration, and especially taxation, in the eastern part of the Parthian empire.[4] They tell us of two categories of land: *uzbar* and *patbāzīk*. The Parthian word for "taxes" or "customs" seems to have been *bāz*, for in the "Parthian stations" of Isidore of Charax (para. 6) we find the expression *βαζιγάβαν* (*bāzīgrabān*) for "customs post". These documents like the inscription from Armazi in Georgia, mentioned above, present the same linguistic problems, viz. whether the use of Aramaic is genuine or only serves as a base of ideographic writing for Middle Parthian. The syntax of many phrases, unacceptable in Aramaic, however, should leave no doubt that the underlying language is Parthian.

A special problem arises from the confrontation of remains and traditions. In the Nisā documents the terms *marzbān*, *xšatrap*, and *dizpat* signify the governor of a province or a district: the *marzbān*s were in charge of the most important and largest provinces, then came the *xšatrap*s, and finally the *dizpat*s, who governed smaller districts. This threefold division corresponds perfectly to the Seleucid divisions of satrapy, eparchy, and hyparchy.[5] Comparison with the parchment P. Dura 20 (A.D. 121), line 2, establishes that the hyparchy was the smallest administrative unit also in the Parthian empire, at least in its western parts.[6]

[1] See chapter 3 in the present volume.

[2] Cf. C. C. Torrey, *Zeitschrift für Semistik* x (1935); A. R. Bellinger and C. B. Welles, *YCS* v (1935).

[3] Cf. H. S. Nyberg, "The Pahlavi Documents from Avromān", *Le Monde Oriental* xvii (Uppsala, 1923).

[4] Dyakonoff and Livshits; see Bibliography p. 1288.

[5] Cf. W. W. Tarn, "Seleucid-Parthian Studies", *PBA* xvi (1930).

[6] Cf. Widengren, "Iran, der grosse Gegner Roms", p. 275 (see Bibliography, p. 1308).

2. *Traditions*

These traditions are found in texts of various languages and epochs. They may be classified as primary and secondary, though the border line is not always easily drawn.

Primary sources

Greek

Fragments of Apollodorus.
Fragments of Arrian.
Polybius x.28–31 (as well as single passages here and there).
The "Parthian Stations" of Isidore of Charax must be an extract from an official Parthian survey; dating from the region of Augustus, it gives us an idea of the extent of the Parthian empire and is one of our most valuable sources.

Latin

Cicero in some of his letters written when he was a provincial governor of Cilicia (*ad Atticum* v, vi; *ad familiares* xv) illustrates the situation in the adjacent Roman provinces after the Roman defeat at Carrhae.
Sallust (*Historiae* iv fragment 69 M) gives information about Lucullus's dealings with the Parthians.

Syriac

The "Song of the Pearl" and other parts of the apocryphal Acts of Thomas inform us about the extent and the feudal organization of the early Parthian kingdom before the conquest of Babylonia and illustrate some social conditions in the eastern kingdom of Gundofarr.[1]
The "Chronicle of Arbela" (its older parts) will be discussed in section II below.
The Abgar Legend of Edessa, extant in the "Doctrine of Addai", gives informatinn about Parthian influence in Edessa and Osrhoene.
The Edessene Chronicle is important for the early history of Osrhoene.

[1] W. Wright (ed. and tr.), *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols (Syriac text; English translation) (London, 1871); P. Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, vol. iii (Paris, 1892), pp. 3–175; A. A. Bevan (ed. and tr.), *The Hymn of the Soul contained in the Syriac Acts of St Thomas* (Cambridge, 1897; Texts and Studies v. 3). See J. A. Delaunay, "Rite et symbolique en *Acta Thomae*", in P. Gignoux and A. Tafazzoli (eds), *Mémorial Jean de Menasce* (Louvain, 1974), pp. 1–34 (Iranian Culture Foundation 185).

Jewish

I Maccabees 14.1–3; II Maccabees 1.13–16.

Babylonian

Cuneiform astronomical tablets and colophons[1] are essential for establishing Parthian chronology. Other such tablets exist and their publication is in preparation.[2]

Chinese

Han shu (chapter 96) and *Shih-chi* (chapter 123) are essential for our knowledge about the events that led up to the great Saka immigration in eastern Iran.

Secondary sources

Here we have a great many Greek and Latin authors, the most important being the following:

Justin gives a compendious extract from Pompeius Trogus, whose prologues are more or less intact. This is our basic historical source for the Parthian period up to and including the reign of Augustus. Unfortunately it shows gaps and does not relate events after 9 B.C. Being only an epitome many of its passages must be elucidated in the light of other sources. Its great defect is that it often neglects chronology and therefore confuses the chain of events. The gaps in its account are often irritating, but it is generally considered reliable.

Strabo (XI.508–17; 522, 524–25, 532; XVI.743–5, 748–9) is very valuable, but as in the case of other Greek sources it is often difficult to place his notices in a correct chronological order.

Diodorus Siculus (XXXIII.18; XXXIV 15–19, 21) is useful for comparison with other material, but the value of each passage depends upon the sources used by the author; his figures are sometimes fantastic.

Plutarch (*Lives*: Crassus; Sulla; Pompey, 36, 38–9; Lucullus, 21, 28, 30, 36; Antony, 37) provides much important, detailed information concerning the period when these Roman generals had to deal with both the Parthians and the Iranians of Asia Minor; his information in general is reliable.

[1] Published by J. Epping and J. N. Strassmeier, *ZA* III (1888), 129–58; IV (1889), 106–52; V (1890), 341–66; VI (1891), 89–102, 217–44; VIII (1893), 149–78.

[2] For this information I am indebted to Prof. D. J. Wiseman.

Dio Cassius (XXXVI.1, 3, 45, 51; XXXVII.5–7; XL.12–30; and various passages dealing with the wars between Rome and Parthia) is one of our most important sources, to be constantly consulted, but at the same time checked against other good sources. Some information is confused and enigmatic.

Appian (*Syriaca* 51, 67–8; *Mithradatica* 104–6; *Bellum Civile* II.65–6, 201) is chiefly interested in the wars of Rome in Asia Minor and Armenia and is only of indirect importance for Parthian history.

Josephus (*Antiquitates* XIII.184–6, 250–3, 344, 371, 384–6; XIV.98, 103, 105–19; *Bellum* I.175–9; VII.244–51) is an extremely valuable source as far as he goes, giving some special information about Adiabene and Jewish–Parthian relations.

Pliny (*Naturalis Historia* VI.44–52, 111–16, 121–2, 134–41, 145–6) is chiefly of value for historical geography and administrative division.

Julius Africanus (*Cestorum fragmenta*, ed. J.-R. Vieillefond, Paris, 1970, I.20, pp. 182–5) has a notice about Bardesanes which gives a concrete picture of the court of Edessa.

Polyaenus (*Strategemata*) is of value for the social and military conditions in Iran after Alexander.

Orosius, ("History" V.iv.16–17; x.8; VI.xiii) has some notices not found elsewhere and is therefore difficult to control; he is of dubious reliability, being late.

Herodian (III.i.2; iv.8–9; IV.x.4; VI.v.4–5) is of value for the later period of Parthian history and gives some notices concerning military institutions, which are, however, not always reliable.

Lucan (*De Bello Civili* III.236; VIII.227, 368–410, 429, 436) has only a few notices of interest.

Lucian, ("How to write history") contains some passages of interest.

The value of passages in some secondary sources has been demonstrated by Wolski who in his study of the circumstances and the date of the establishment of the Arsacid dynasty has proved the historical value of both Justin and Strabo.[1]

Armenian

Agathangelos, extant also in a Greek version;
Moses Xorenaci, on whom more later;
P'awstos Biwzandaci;

[1] J. Wolski, "The decay of the Iranian empire of the Seleucids and the chronology of the Parthian beginnings", *Berytus* XII (1956–7).

Lazar P'arp'eci;
Ełiše Vardapet.

All the Armenian sources are important for our knowledge of social and religious affairs and political and military institutions, and therefore cannot be ignored; but for the events of the Parthian period they are of very little value.[1]

Islamic

These sources possess historical value chiefly for their narration of the downfall of the Parthian empire and the establishment of the Sasanian dynasty; here they are essential; cf. below Section II.[2]

Chinese

Annals of the former Han, chapter 96 and parts of 61.
Annals of the later Han, chapter 118.
These two sources are valuable for the same reason as indicated above for the other Chinese text-material.

Iranian

Ayātkār ī Zarērān
Draxt ī asūrīg
Both texts are extant only in Sasanian recensions. They have little value for political or military history, but are valuable for the history of literary tradition during this period. The *Ayātkār ī Zarērān* was originally a small epic poem, written in Parthian, based upon Avestan traditions.[3]

In view of the deplorable scarcity of original and authentic Iranian documents we can only infer the older layers of tradition from the extant later material. A good example is Minorsky's reconstruction of the Parthian background of Gurgānī's romantic epic *Vīs u Rāmīn*, written between A.D. 1040 and 1054.[4]

What we are able to gather from the Syriac "Song of the Pearl", like *Vīs u Rāmīn*, is valid for the early Parthian period. It is interesting to

[1] K. Patkanian, "Essai d'une histoire de la dynastie des Sassanides d'après les renseignements fournis par les historiens arméniens", *JA* 1866, used the Armenian texts for the following period. The Armenian texts were used by me in several publications: *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung*, *Recherches sur le féodalisme iranien*, *Der Feudalismus im alten Iran* among them.

[2] See also chapter 10(*b*), pp. 359ff in the present volume.

[3] See also chapter 31, pp. 1158, 1161ff in the present volume.

[4] V. Minorsky, "Vis u Ramin, A Parthian Romance", *BSOAS* XI (1946), p. 35.

see that the position of *bitaxš* ("Second One") is referred to in this work. He is called in Syriac *paṣgrīb* (v. 48), a designation also recurring in the Aramaic inscriptions of Hatra; a corresponding form is found in Armenian literature.[1] Many other technical terms of Parthian origin are met with in the Syriac poem. The centre of the Parthian kingdom seems to be still situated in Hyrcania (vv.72–3), the homeland of the Parthians at a very early period.

Further data about social structure, administrative divisions and political institutions are recovered from Armenian texts and Parthian loanwards in Armenian, especially if we compare these sources with texts of a later period, still reflecting the Parthian structure of Armenian society. Thus we can infer from Armenian sources the institution of "fosterer" (Armenian *dayeak*; M. Pers. *dāyak*), not only for Sasanian times but even for the Parthian period. It is attested also in Syriac sources, such as the "Song of the Pearl" and the Acts of Martyrs.[2]

Since classical sources provide us with the most valuable material for a reconstruction of the history of the Parthian period, the importance of correct editions of these texts is manifest. In the light of recent research some suggested emendations lose their validity. For instance the expression *populorum ordo* in Justin XLI.2.2, which Gutschmid proposed to read as *probulorum ordo*, is a technical term, found also in other Latin texts, probably rendering a Greek expression *τάξις τῶν λαῶν*, the *λαοί* denoting the farmer-tenants cultivating the royal estates. As the Parthian equivalent of *λαός* we may surmise the word *ram* "herd", i.e. the farmer-tenants constituting the retinue of a ruler. In Armenia, which bears the imprint of Parthian civilization, we find the class of *ṙamikan* (M. Iran. *ramīkān*), the members of a *ram*, people bound to live as their lord's serfs, but not slaves.

Further we should try to understand as exactly as possible technical expressions used in the classical texts. Strabo (XI.14, 15) tells us that Armenia had to cede to Parthia 70 "valleys" (*αὐλῶνας*) during the youth of Tigranes. This Greek word clearly renders M. Iran. *rōdastāk*, met with in the sources as denoting an administrative unit, for rōdestāk may also mean "valley" as opposed to *garān* "mountains". The so-called "valleys" in Strabo's text accordingly really denote fixed administrative units.

[1] See the discussion in Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit* (1960), pp. 27ff., 29ff.; E. Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres en Iranien ancien* (1966), p. 51. See also pp. 735f in the present volume.

[2] Cf. the survey in Widengren, *Der Feudalismus im alten Iran* (Cologne, 1969), pp. 69ff.

Translations of classical texts, even if made by well-known scholars, are sometimes inexact, since the translators were unacquainted with things Iranian. This general observation is valid for all periods of the pre-islamic history of Iran. It may be illustrated by the passage in Dio LXXX.iii where the Parthian resistance in Armenia against the founder of the Sasanian dynasty is narrated. Here the translator has missed the real meaning of the word *παίδων* by translating it "sons" rather than "pages", for it is said that Ardashīr suffered a defeat at the hand of the Armenians, the Medes, and the corps of Ardavān's pages, who obviously were a unit of crack troops.[1]

Another instance may be found in the "Chronicle of Arbela", where a mistranslation has introduced a non-existent Aršak as son of Ardavān V, with ensuing confusion among numismatists.

Scholars possessed of an exclusively classical training are apt to neglect the non-classical sources in their interpretation of the sources. This shortcoming may be illustrated by the otherwise meritorious contributions of Wolski. His endeavour to sketch the structure and development of the Parthian empire[2] suffers from a defective knowledge of both sources and literature in the field of oriental, especially Iranian studies.

II. SASANIAN HISTORY

For the Sasanian period we are far better provided with sources, both Iranian and non-Iranian.

1. *Remains*

The *non-textual remains* are of the same character as for the previous epoch but more abundant. Topographical studies are again important; a model for these, but concerned only with northern Mesopotamia, is the careful work of L. Dillemann.[3]

As to excavations it should be pointed out that several sites along the Euphrates are of the utmost importance for the understanding of the Iranian defence system, especially in the Sasanian period. However, such places as 'Anatha, Thilutha, Achaiachala, Hīt, Pērōz-Šāpūr (= Anbār), and Maiozamalcha, have not yet been excavated at all, hardly even explored – apart from Anbār.[4]

[1] For another such illustration see Widengren, "Iran, der grosse Gegner Roms", p. 282, with n. 336.

[2] J. Wolski, "Le rôle et l'importance des mercenaires dans l'état Parthe", *IA* v (1965), 103–15, criticized by Widengren, "Iran, der grosse Gegner Roms", pp. 286ff.

[3] *Haute Mésopotamie orientale et pays adjacents* (Paris, 1962).

[4] See A. Maricq, *Classica et Orientalia* (Paris, 1965), pp. 147–56.

The French excavations at Bactra have been very useful for our knowledge of the construction of city walls, fortifications, and the quality of bricks.[1] We can supplement these data by textual descriptions such as that given in Abū Nu'aim, *Dhikr akhbār Iṣbahān*, ed. S. Dedering, I (Leiden, 1931), p. 15.

Excavations of other sites in Iran proper, such as Susa, Bīshāpūr, Šīz, have also yielded important information. The Russian campaigns in the ancient sites of Chorasmia and Sogdiana have revealed new provinces of ancient Iranian culture, as have the French excavations in Afghanistan. These finds significantly increase our acquaintance with the history and civilization of eastern Iran. In this connection we may also refer to the Chinese stone reliefs showing Sogdian embassies and scenes from Sogdian social life.[2]

The chronological aspects of Sasanian coinage present fewer problems than the Parthian coins. The dates of the coins of the Kushān kings, and the related problem of the era of Kaniṣka, however, remain somewhat controversial.[3] The Hephthalite and Chionite coins also present historical problems which are as yet only partly solved.[4]

For the Sasanian epoch we possess a great number of seals and gems, some with inscriptions. The administrative seals are especially important and the pioneer effort of Herzfeld, followed by Bivar, Frye, and Gignoux, should be mentioned.[5] Once a complete survey of these seals is made, we may be able to reconstruct the administrative divisions of Sasanian Iran, at least where the evidence of the seals is supplemented by notices in Arabic, Persian, Syriac and classical sources. We should not forget the help afforded in this respect by the lists of Christian bishoprics.

Of *textual remains*, composed of inscriptions, parchments, papyri, and ostraca, a far richer selection is at our disposal for Sasanian times than for the Parthian period.

[1] See D. Schlumberger, "Excursus. Les briques des ramparts et des stupas de Bactres", in B. Dagens, M. Le Berre and D. Schlumberger, *Monuments préislamiques d'Afghanistan* (Paris, 1964), pp. 90–2 (MDAFA 19).

[2] A. Salmony, *Die chinesische Steinplastik* (Köln Museum fur ostasiatische Kunst; Berlin, 1932).

[3] See chapter 5, pp. 200ff for a discussion.

[4] See R. Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephtalites* (Cairo, 1948); R. Göbl, *Dokumente zur Geschichte der iranischen Hunnen in Baktrien und Indien* I–IV (Wiesbaden, 1967). [See also chapter 5, pp. 212ff in the present volume.]

[5] Cf. E. Herzfeld, *Transactions International Numismatic Congress* 1936 (London, 1938), pp. 413–26; A. D. H. Bivar, *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum: Stamp Seals*, II: *The Sassanian Dynasty* (London, 1969); R. N. Frye, *WZKM* LVI (1960), pp. 32–5; *IA* VIII (1968), pp. 118–33; Ph. Gignoux, in *La Persia nel Medioevo* (Rome, 1972), pp. 535–42.

The Sasanian inscriptions comprise a series of lapidary documents left by kings and dignitaries, beginning with a short inscription of Ardashīr I, the founder of the dynasty, at Naqsh-i Rajab. The inscription of Shāpūr I on the walls of the so-called Ka'ba-yi Zardusht relates his campaigns against Rome, the extent of his empire, and his pious foundations. Without doubt it is the most important epigraphic and historical source left by the Sasanian rulers; we do not yet possess an entirely satisfactory edition of it.[1]

Shāpūr I left other inscriptions, but next to his great inscription just mentioned, only his inscription at Hājjīābād, commemorating his triumph in a shooting contest, commands especial interest.[2]

Much more important, especially from the point of view of the history of religion, are the inscriptions left by the high priest Kartīr, the principal adversary of Mānī; they give us most valuable information about the development of the Sasanian state religion (Zoroastrianiam).[3]

Next to the great Shāpūr inscription in historical importance from the political point of view comes the long, but unfortunately terribly mutilated inscription left by Narseh at Paikuli. Only certain parts of it can at present be reconstructed with certainty. Herzfeld spent much labour on it and after him Henning cleared up some difficulties in its interpretation.[4] It concerns *inter alia* the wars leading up to the victory of Narseh over Bahrām III. Even in its present condition it is highly important for our knowledge of the internal affairs of Iran during a rather obscure period.[5]

The inscriptions left by Shāpūr II, and some minor private inscriptions, hardly provide any significant information, except names and titles.

[1] M. Sprengling, *AJSLL* LIII (1936–7), pp. 126–144; *ZDMG* XCI (1937), pp. 652–72; *AJSLL* LVII (1940), pp. 341–429; *Third Century Iran: Sapor and Kartir* (Chicago, 1953), pp. 1–35; W. B. Henning, *BSOS* IX (1937–9), pp. 823–49; A. Maricq, *Classica et Orientalia*, pp. 37–101; M. I. Rostovtzeff, *Berytus* VIII (1943), pp. 17–60; W. Ensslin, *Zu den Kriegen des Sassaniden Schapur I* (Munich, 1949); R. N. Frye, in *Studi Orientalistici in onore di Georgio Levi Della Vida* (Rome, 1956), pp. 314–55. [See also chapter 32 (*c*), pp. 1207 ff in the present volume.]

[2] See H. S. Nyberg, in *Ost og Vest, Afhandlinger Tilegnede Arthur Christensen* (Copenhagen, 1945), pp. 62–74, with corrections in his *Manual of Pahlavi* II, *Glossary* (Wiesbaden, 1974).

[3] See Ph. Gignoux, *JA* 1968, pp. 387–418; Sprengling, *Third Century Iran*, pp. 37–60; M. L. Chaumont, *JA* 1960, pp. 339–80; W. Hinz, *AMI* III (1970), pp. 251–65.

[4] See "A Farewell to the Khagan of the Aq-Qatärän", *BSOAS* XIV (1952), pp. 501–22.

[5] A complete bibliography concerning inscriptions is published by Ph. Gignoux, *Glossaire des Inscriptions pehlevies et parthes* (London, 1972), pp. 9–14. The external history of the time of Narses has been treated by W. Ensslin, *Zur Ostpolitik des Kaisers Diokletian* (Munich, 1942).

The inscriptions of the early Sasanian kings, above all those of Shāpūr I and Narseh, are particularly valuable (compared to our literary sources) because they clearly show how the administrative organization of the empire differed from ruler to ruler, in the distribution of local kingdoms and satrapies and in the organization of the higher bureaucracy, with its combination of feudal fiefs and administrative posts.[1] Smaller inscriptions and dipinti from Darband and Dura are of comparatively small historical value. The ostraca in Middle Persian from Dura, however, give us knowledge of city organization with its various professions.[2]

The papyri and parchments – and these are very few indeed – are extremely difficult to read and interpret, and, until all existing collections have been published and translated, it is very difficult to get anything but small details from them. The collection of Berlin edited by Hansen is our only source as yet.[3] From these documents, which are from Egypt and belong to the period of Persian occupation between 619 and 629, we can obtain information about military and administrative organization and confirmation of some terms found in literary sources.[4]

Here it should be noted that the famous "Letter of Tansar" is not really a relic of the time of Ardashīr I,[5] but is a fabrication from the time of Khusrau I, so it has little historical value, except as revealing the aspirations of the priesthood in late Sasanian times. Against the authenticity of the "Letter" several arguments speak decisively; among these are: (1) History shows that the power of the Zoroastrian priesthood was far less than presumed in this text. (2) Its political influence was insignificant as compared with that exercised by the feudal lords. (3) When historical sources give details about the accession or deposition of a Sasanian king they present a picture at variance with that found in the "Letter"; they do not even mention the *mōdadān-mōbad*.[6]

On the other hand the *ex-voto* of Khusrau II, which has been neg-

[1] Cf. chapter 19, pp. 729ff. in the present volume.

[2] See M. Harmatta in *La Persia nel Medioevo*, pp. 467–75.

[3] O. Hansen, *Die mittelpersischen Papyri der Papyrussammlung der staatlichen Museen zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1938); cf. J. de Menasce, *JA* 1953, pp. 185–96.

[4] See Widengren, "Recherches sur le féodalisme iranien", *Orientalia Suecana* v (Uppsala, 1956), p. 162, n. 4: more references should have been given, e.g. such expressions as *šahristān, dēh, ōstikān, asvār*.

[5] Cf. M. Boyce, *The Letter of Tansar*, Introduction.

[6] See Widengren, *Feudalismus*, pp. 131–7; "Iran, der grosse Gegner Roms", pp. 245ff.; Wikander, *Feuerpriester*, pp. 192ff. and *passim*.

lected by historians, has been proved by Peeters to be authentic and valuable for the study of conditions in that king's reign.[1]

2. *Traditions*

A distinction between *primary* and *secondary* sources is hardly possible here, except in some cases, which will be pointed out.

The Greek and Latin texts are of the greatest value for establishing the chronology as well as for the political and military events in the West, but generally leave us in the dark where the East is concerned. Exceptional in this respect are the accounts of Menander and Petrus Patricius, both of the 6th century A.D.

Greek and Latin

Dio Cassius, the well-known source for Parthian history, relates the downfall of the Parthian and the foundation of the Sasanian dynasty.
Dexippus of Athens (only fragments, after A.D. 250).
Trebellius Pollio (about A.D. 300).
Flavius Vopiscus (about A.D. 300).
Aurelius Victor (between A.D. 300 and 360).
Ammianus Marcellinus, the Roman general and historian, is an outstanding primary source for the time of Shāpūr II, against whom he fought in the campaign of Julian the Apostate.
Eutropius also took part in this campaign, for which he is a primary source.
Eunapius (only fragments, about A.D. 400).
Theodorus of Mopsuestia (d. *c.* A.D. 428).
Theodoret of Cyprus (*c.* A.D. 397–457).
Socrates Scholasticus (first half of 5th century).
Sozomenus (first half of 5th century).
Zosimus (about A.D. 410).
Priscus (5th century A.D.).
Orosius (5th century A.D.).
Euagrius (after A.D. 600).
Procopius is a primary source for the history of Iran in the time of Kavād and Khusrau I, because he was in the company of Belisarius during his campaigns against these two Sasanian rulers; he also collected information concerning the organization and conditions of the Sasanian empire.

[1] "Les ex-voto de Khosrau Aparwez à Sergiopolis", *AB* LXV (1947), pp. 5–56.

Petrus Patricius wrote a history, *de legationibus*, based on his own experiences in diplomatic service; this is a valuable primary source.

Agathias (died about 582) continued the work of Procopius; he is a primary source, because he had access to the royal annals, kept in the archives of Ctesiphon. But he also made use of popular traditions, e.g. when relating the story of the young Ardashīr.

Menander Protector (6th century), who wrote *de legationibus*, is a primary source of great value for diplomatic history.

Theophylactos Simocatta (7th century) provides extremely valuable information about Sasanian institutions and above all about the insurrection of Bahrām Chōbēn. He enables us to place in proper perspective the legendary stories related by the oriental sources and reconstruct – with the aid of the Armenian author Sebeos – the factual events of this period. This has been done by A. Christensen in a small but fine piece of research.[1] Theophylactos, however, is not always reliable, as Peeters has shown,[2] though more so than Peeters would have us believe.

Malalas (6th century A.D.), Syncellus (died after 810), Theophanes (died 817), and the so-called *Chronicon Paschale* (7th century) are sources not held in great esteem, but not to be entirely neglected; Malalas occasionally provides important notices.

Late Byzantine historians such as Nicephorus, Cedrenus and Zonaras may occasionally yield some information, but their source value is doubtful.

The Persian conquest of Jerusalem by Khusrau II attracted much interest and is therefore reflected in many sources which cannot be detailed here.[3]

Armenian

The Armenian sources are important both for later Parthian and for Sasanian history. But even the best of them must be used only after careful evaluation. A general defect common to nearly all of them is exaggeration when national feelings are involved.

Agathangelos's "History of the Armenians" is composed of several originally independent parts, put together after A.D. 456.[4] This is a

[1] *Romanen om Bahram Tschobin* (Copenhagen, 1907).

[2] "Les ex-voto", pp. 46ff.

[3] See P. Peeters, *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* IX (Beirut, 1923), pp. 1–42. Some literature is given in *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie* II, p. 543 n. 5, and Nöldeke, *Syrische Chronik*, pp. 24ff.

[4] See G. Garitte, *Documents pour l'étude du livre d'Agathange* (Città del Vaticano, 1946).

primary source not only for the introduction of Christianity into Armenia, but also for the earliest period of Sasanian history. The work is in a sense continued by "The Life of the Holy Nerses" and the "History of Taron", written by John Mamikonian.

P'awstos Biwzandaci (first half of the 5th century) is a valuable source for the period 420–485, but his chronology of the events is occasionally confused and his figures are sometimes fantastic. Accordingly his value is more in the field of political and military institutions.

Eznik of Kołb (about A.D. 450) is a good source for religious history, now accessible in a reliable edition, with an excellent translation.[1]

Lazar P'arpeci (written in 504) continues the history of P'awstos down to 485. This is a comparatively objective and reliable source.

Ełišē Vardapet in his "History of Vardan and the Wars of the Armenians" lacks historical objectivity and must be checked everywhere; but it is a good source for the institutions and the atmosphere of the years 439–51, the highly animated epoch when Yazdgird II tried to introduce Zoroastrianism in Armenia at the expense of Christianity.

Sebeos is a first class primary source; he relates briefly the events of Pērōz's reign (459–84) and the subsequent period until 591, but then in more detail the last phase of the Sasanian empire at the time of the Arab conquests. This is one of our most important sources for the reign of Khusrau II and the period after him.

Moses Xorenaci is one of the most difficult sources to handle, being a late compiler (probably of the 9th century),[2] but here and there he gives interesting details, which cannot be mere invention, and above all he provides us with a geographical survey of the administrative divisions of Sasanian Iran. J. Markwart's edition, translation and commentary of this geographical part is indispensable to all students of Sasanian history.[3]

The Armenian sources were utilized by Patkanian in his meritorious, but now outdated work on the history of the Sasanian dynasty.[4]

The Armenian texts, especially the "Acts of the Martyrs", should be more intensely explored and utilized with special regard to the many Iranian loanwords and their importance for the study of Iranian institutions. In this field the work started by Hübschmann has been carried on by Bailey, Benveniste, Henning and others, and their findings should be more widely used by the historians. Many Iranian institutions, such

[1] L. Mariès and C. Mercier, *Eznik de Kolb De Deo* (Paris, 1959).
[2] See Christensen, *L'Iran*, p. 79 n. 4 for references.
[3] *Ērānšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenaci* (Berlin, 1901).
[4] Cf. Patkanian, "Essai", *JA* 1866.

as the fosterer, dayeak, are reflected in Armenian sources, as are the feudal principles and terminology of older periods. Fundamental here is the division of Armenian society into *āzātān*, the nobles, and *šēnakān*, the common people; their representatives constitute the great diet, among whose prerogatives was the election of the king.[1]

Syriac

The "Chronicle of Arbela", already mentioned, is of great value for the older periods of Sasanian history, especially concerning the downfall of the Parthians and the triumph of the Sasanians. The negative judgement on the reliability of this chronicle once pronounced by Peeters is only partly justified.[2] In the narration of political history it is not at all biased.[3]

The "Chronicle of Karkā d^eBēt-S^elōk" is a short but valuable source which offers information concerning the early period of Sasanian history and relates the conflicts of Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Christianity in Kirkuk and its vicinity. Here too we must distinguish between those parts where the author is highly biased and other parts where he is more objective.[4]

The "Edessene Chronicle" is of value for the conditions in Edessa during the early Sasanian period.

The "Chronicle of Michael the Syrian", who was a patriarch of Antiocheia (1166–99) is of considerable importance. It has a rather composite character, and should be used with discretion; some of its sources are reliable and important.[5]

The Nestorian "Chronicle of Seert", in spite of its being preserved only in Arabic, is included here, because it is written entirely in the Syrian Christian tradition; it not only informs us about the status of the Christians in the Sasanian empire but is also valuable for our knowledge of taxation.[6]

The chronicle of Abu'l-Faraj (in Syriac, Bar Hebraeus; d. 1286) has

[1] Cf. Widengran, *Feudalismus*, Ch. v; "Iran, der grosse Gegner Roms", pp. 285, 295.

[2] Cf. pp. 92, 118, 925f in the present volume. Ed.

[3] See the survey of discussion in G. Wiessner, *Zur Märtyrerüberlieferung aus der Christenverfolgung Schapurs* II (Göttingen, 1967), pp. 21ff.; N. Pigulevskaja, *Les villes de l'état Iranien* (Paris, 1963), pp. 113ff.; Widengren, "The establishment of the Sasanian dynasty in the light of new evidence", in *La Persia nel Medioevo* (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rome, 1971), pp. 723ff.

[4] Cf. Pigulevskaja, *op. cit.*, pp. 111ff.

[5] As an illustration of obviously authentic tradition see the notice given by Michael on the Jews as serving in the Sasanian armies; cf. Widengren, "The Status of the Jews in the Sasanian Empire", *IA* 1 (1961), pp. 145ff.

[6] See Widengren, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

utilized the chronicle of Michael and does not offer much independent tradition.[1]

The "History" of John of Ephesus on the other hand is very valuable for the period of Khusrau I – in spite of its occasionally rather confused narratives – and gives some details not to be found elsewhere.[2]

The "Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite" is an excellent primary source; it gives a short survey of Iranian history from the reign of Pērōz up to that of Kavād and then treats in great detail the first half of the reign of Kavād. It is indispensable as the basis of the history of Kavād, as Christensen has shown in his classic research.[3]

"Guidi's Anonymous Chronicle", written a short time after 670, is a primary source and relates the history of Sasanian Iran from the death of Hormizd IV in 590 until the Arab conquest. Nöldeke's translation and commentary are of the utmost value.[4]

The Syriac Acts of the Christian Persian Martyrs[5] are partly of great historical value, not only for the religious history of Iran, but also for the history of Sasanian administration, political institutions, law and juridical practice, as well as civilization in general. They need to be analysed and more fully utilized. A promising beginning has been made by G. Wiessner.[6]

The "Novel of Julian the Apostate" is a work of a legendary nature; yet it has a few notices valuable for the history of Iranian political institutions, especially the position of the Great King in relation to the magnates of the empire.

Theodor bar Kōnai is one of several Syriac historians dealing with the religions practised in Iran: Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Manichaeism, and Mazdakism.

The Law-book of the Persian archbishop Jesubocht (Yishūʿ-bokht) is a valuable source on jurisprudence, complementing the *Mātigān i Hazār Dātastān*, mentioned below.[7]

[1] His *Chronicon Syriacum* was published by P. Bedjan (Paris, 1890); facsimile edition with English tr. by E. A. W. Budge, 2 vols (London, 1932; the translation is useful but not always reliable; abridged Arabic version ed. A. Salhani (Beirut, 1890)).

[2] The third part of the "Ecclesiastical History", dealing with the events of the years A.D. 575–85, ed. W. Cureton (Oxford, 1853) and tr. R. Payne Smith (Oxford, 1860); also ed. and Latin tr. E. W. Brooks (Textus: Paris, 1935; Versio: Louvain, 1936. CSCO, Scriptores Syri, 3rd series, vol. 3).

[3] *Le règne du roi Kawadh I et le communisme Mazdakite* (Copenhagen, 1925), pp. 5ff.

[4] *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik* (Vienna, 1893).

[5] *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, ed. Bedjan, parts II, IV; German translation in G. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer* (Leipzig, 1880).

[6] *Märtyrerüberlieferung.*

[7] *Syrische Rechtsbücher* III (Berlin, 1914).

Written Iranian sources of an historical character, dating from Sasanian times, are very scanty. But a wealth of material, based on Sasanian traditions, exists in Persian and Arabic texts.

Middle Persian

The Sasanian law-book, *Mātigān i Hazār Dātastān*, is difficult to interpret because of the bad state of the text and its technical language.[1] Bartholomae was the first to occupy himself with its textual problems and its interpretation, later followed by Pagliaro and Perikhanian.[2]

The *Kārnāmag i Artaxšēr i Pāpagān* relates the heroic deeds of the founder of the dynasty, Ardashīr I, and his son Shāpūr, but in a highly legendary way, so that the historical value of this source is in the main reduced to what can be gleaned from it about military and political institutions; it mentions a number of technical terms in these two fields, not found in other texts – or only found with difficulty. This source also confirms the existence of a "fosterer" (*dāyak*), but does not actually mention the word. A valuable source for the history of Iranian feudalism, it also has some importance for our knowledge of the establishment of the Sasanian dynasty.

The "Catalogue of the Provincial Capitals of Ērānšahr" gives an account of the foundation of the great cities of Sasanian Iran, together with several notices, partly of a legendary character. J. Markwart, who edited and translated this text with a valuable commentary,[3] has not always succeeded in solving the problem of how to distinguish between the legendary and the factual. For the western frontiers a short investigation by H. S. Nyberg is important.[4]

The *Mātigān i Čatrang*, a small and amusing text, may be mentioned because of some details concerning the court.[5]

As far as the political history is concerned we have to rely on those Persian and Arabic texts which have preserved authentic Sasanian traditions. Fortunately there exist a great many such sources, but unfortunately their evidence very often is conflicting and source

[1] See Ch. 18, pp. 628ff and Ch. 32(*a*), pp. 1189f in the present volume.

[2] C. Bartholomae, *Über ein sassanidisches Rechtsbuch* (Heidelberg, 1910); *Zum sassanidischen Recht* I–V (Heidelberg, 1918–23); A. Pagliaro, *RSO* XXII (1947), pp. 60ff.; *RSO* XXIV (1949), pp. 120 ff.; "Riflessi di diritto Romano nella dottrina sassanide", in *La Persia e il mondo greco-romano* (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rome, 1966, pp. 13ff.); A. G. Perikhanian, *Sasanidskiy Sudelnik* (Erevan, 1973).

[3] For a general evaluation see Pigulevskaja, *op. cit.*, pp. 97ff.

[4] *Septentrionalia et Orientalia, Studia B. Karlgren dedicata* (Stockholm, 1959), pp. 319ff.

[5] The edition published by C. Salemann, *Mittelpersische Studien* (St Petersburg, 1887), pp. 207–42 has been improved by Nyberg in his *Manual of Pahlavi* II, *Glossary*.

criticism is only in its infancy. Nöldeke and after him Christensen were pioneers in this field, but we must in our days make a full analysis of the value of these sources in the light of the new material at our disposal.

Persian

The *Shāh-nāma* of Firdausī must be mentioned first as the repository of national Iranian tradition, from which much useful information about Sasanian institutions and civilization may be gained. What he has to say about ancient Iran has on the whole the imprint of Sasanian conditions, but at the same time it has been shown that his technical expressions cannot be equated with Sasanian terminology.[1]

Bal'amī's Persian translation of Ṭabarī's history is the most important prose work; it has a value of its own, independent of the Arabic text, because it gives us Iranian equivalents for the Arabic of Ṭabarī.

The *Mujmal al-tawārīkh* is a compilation of restricted value; it seldom communicates anything not found elsewhere and in more detail.

The *Fārs-nāma* of Ibn al-Balkhī is a primary source of great value; it has preserved much authentic material. It has been used with profit for researches in Iranian feudalism, because it offers important information on the position of the great vassals in their capacity of being the king's liegeman and bondsman at the same time. This source is also valuable for historical geography.[2]

The *Siyar al-mulūk* (*Siyāsat-nāma*) of Niẓām al-Mulk, contains many traditions and notices from Sasanian times, often of considerable value. This source, however, is sometimes very unreliable, especially as far as chronology is concerned, and should be used with caution.[3]

Some local chronicles deserve mention:

Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān of Ibn Isfandiyār, which includes "The Letter of Tansar".

Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān-u Rūyān-u Māzandarān of Ẓahīr al-Dīn Mar'ashī;

Tārīkh-i Qumm of Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Qummī, written in Arabic, but translated into Persian;

Tārīkh-i Sīstān, written by an anonymous author.

We need a complete survey of existing local chronicles and a thorough analysis of what they may have to give us of material for Sasanian times and of authentic Sasanian traditions.

[1] Cf. H. Andersen, *Ost og Vest*, pp. 84ff.

[2] Cf. Widengren, *Feudalismus*, pp. 22ff. for a typical case.

[3] Cf. O. Klíma, *Mazdak* (Prague, 1957), pp. 12, 262 on the *Siyāsat-nāma* account of the Mazdakite movement.

Arabic

Ya'qūbī (after A.D. 850) is rather compendiary, but informs us about administrative and military organization, giving valuable details not found elsewhere.[1]

Jāḥiẓ (d. A.D. 869) is reputed to be the author of *Kitāb al-Tāj*. This book, probably not authentic, provides information concerning Sasanian court etiquette.

Ibn Qutaiba (d. A.D. 889) has preserved much authentic material, *inter alia* about Sasanian war techniques.

Balādhurī (d. A.D. 892) is especially valuable for the Arab conquest of Iran. His chronology occasionally creates difficulties and "epic" traits diminish the value of his history.

Dīnawarī (d. A.D. 895) is a primary source, providing important information not found elsewhere on Sasanian history in general and the downfall of the Sasanian empire. It has a significance of its own, independent of e.g. Ṭabarī.

Ṭabarī (d. A.D. 923) is an absolutely essential primary source. Nöldeke's translation and commentary of the section dealing with Sasanian history has considerably enhanced its usefulness. The danger is that historians have relied too much upon Ṭabarī and neglected other sources. One example may be taken from the field of taxation, where Altheim and Stiehl in their valuable study have relied exclusively upon Ṭabarī for the reforms of Khusrau I, not observing that other sources have preserved authentic material going back to Ibn al-Muqaffa', whereby the existence of a *jizya* already in Sasanian Iran is proved; this was a polltax imposed upon Jews and Christians as well as a few other categories.[2]

Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq also called Eutychius, patriarch of Alexandria (d. 940) is fairly reliable.

Mas'ūdī (d. 956), the author of *Murūj al-dhahab* and *Kitāb al-tanbīh*, also wrote a great history to which he often refers; this is regrettably lost. His two preserved works are not a real substitute for the author here is more interested in entertaining his reader than in giving reliable information. However he still communicates a wealth of valuable knowledge about Sasanian civilization.

Ḥamza Iṣfahānī (written 961) is a reliable, if somewhat compendiary source.

[1] Cf. Christensen, *op. cit.*, pp. 140 n. 3, 519ff.

[2] Cf. Widengren, "Status of the Jews", pp. 149–54.

Muṭahhar ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī (written 966) is a rather poor source.
Tha'ālibī (d. 1038) is a very important source, though perhaps more valuable for the history of literary tradition than for factual history; it has been successfully used by Wikander.
Bīrūnī (d. 1048), an objective and most reliable author, is important from many points of view, most of all for chronology and time-reckoning.
Nihāyat al-irab: this anonymous text, written probably before A.D. 1050, to some extent agrees with Dīnavarī. All scholars until recently have thought it to be of little or no value. It includes much material of a literary character not found elsewhere and M. Grignaschi has proved the value of this.[1]
Three late historians (Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn Miskawaih and Abu'l-Fidā) occasionally provide regional information.
Khvārazmī in his *Mafātīḥ al-'ulūm* is valuable for several technical terms.

The geographical writings, represented by Ibn Khurdādbih, Hamadānī, Istakhrī, Ibn Hauqal and Yāqūt, yield much information, especially as far as political and administrative conditions are concerned. Their notices about financial questions, taxation and the like in Islamic times may be used for comparison with the Sasanian period.

Among local chronicles in Arabic we have already (above p. 1270) referred to the *Dhikr akhbār Iṣbahān* and its importance for our knowledge of fortification technique. It is valuable also for the position of the Jews and the battles leading up to the Arab conquest of Iṣfahān. The reports about the fighting itself must, however, be used with the utmost discrimination, as has been convincingly shown by A. Noth.[2]

On the whole the sources for the history of the Arab conquest of Iran have not yet been adequately analysed, in spite of the magnificent effort of L. Caetani[3] and the penetrating criticism of J. Wellhausen.[4]

Chinese

Several Chinese sources give valuable notices, many of them emanating from travellers; some are accessible in the following publications:
S. Beal (tr.), *Buddhist Records of the Western World* II, London, 1884; repr. 1906 (Trubner's Oriental Series).

[1] *La Nihāyatu-l-Arab* (Damascus, 1969) and also *JA* 1966.
[2] "Isfahān-Nihāwand", *ZDMG* CXVIII (1968), pp. 274–96.
[3] *Annali dell'Islam* I–X (Milan, 1905–27); in this monumental work the author sees sources and events exclusively from the Arab point of view; it therefore needs to be supplemented.
[4] *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten* VI, *Prolegomena zur ältestan Geschichte des Islam* (Berlin, 1899), pp. 1–160; this source-critical study, a classic, also looks on things exclusively from the Arab point of view.

E. Chavannes (tr.), "Voyage de Song Yun", *BEFEO* III (1903), pp 379–441.
E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux.* St Petersburg, 1903.

III. SOURCE-CRITICISM

The Arabic and Persian sources pose special problems; as a typical illustration we may choose our most important source for this period, the chronicle of Ṭabarī. Like all Arabic historians he based his exposition of Sasanian events on traditions transmitted by various persons – whether the *isnād*s are preserved or not. Thus he often gives conflicting reports. When following a special line of traditions, he arranges them in a chronological order, which may be altogether unfounded. One must first break up the composite exposition into its separate traditions, and then compare them with those found in other equally detailed reports. The results of such critical analysis may then be checked against Classical, Armenian and Syriac sources, not forgetting the auxiliary witness of coinage.

As an example the controversial question of the numerical strength of the last Sasanian field army may be examined here. B. Spuler abstains from taking any definite position.[1] The range from 60,000 to 150,000 men is generally accepted. Actually we read in Ibn al-Athīr (III, p. 4, ll. 12ff.) that "the Iranians . . . assembled at Nihāvand . . . 50,000 and 100,000 fighting men." This curious manner of expressing the number 150,000 should arouse our suspicion. If we compare a corresponding passage in Balādhurī (p. 310, l. 16) we read: "60,000 [men], and it is [also] said (*yuqālu*) 100,000 [men]." By suppressing the word *yuqālu* ("it is said") Ibn al-Athīr arrives at the false total of 150,000 – of course in order to magnify the triumph of the Arabs. The figure of 50,000 or 60,000 men is quite credible, as we know that the strength of a Sasanian field army did not exceed 50,000 men; cf. Procopius, *Bellum* XIII. 23; XIV. 1.[2]

The Byzantine authors do not require so much source-criticism as the Arabic and Persian texts. All of them serve to rectify and confirm the oriental sources.

Procopius is extremely well informed about the reigns of Kavād and

[1] *Iran in früh-islamischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 1952), p. 13 with n. 8.
[2] See further below.

Khusrau I up to A.D. 550 and provides us with a fixed chronology for this period. Among other details of the wars between the two empires he informs us about the strength of the Sasanian field armies. His sober account enables us to check and correct the sometimes quite fantastic Arabic notices about the strength of the Iranian armies.

Menander Protector deals with the embassy sent by the Byzantine emperor in about 569–70 to the Khaqan, the ruler of the Turks living in the territories east of Iran. This account has great value for the intricate problems connected with the eastern frontier of the Sasanian empire after the fall of the Hephthalite kingdom. Menander's text, which hardly offers any source-critical problems, serves to supplement and corroborate the data furnished by the Arabic and Persian sources, among which *Nihāyat* gives valuable evidence not found elsewhere.

Theophylactos is our main source for the period when Bahrām Chōbēn, the general, vied with Khusrau Parvēz for sovereignty. Peeters has shown that Theophylactos in some passages copied Euagrius, and at the same time misrepresented him. Theophylactos' chronology is not always correct and he has invented some episodes.[1] But he provides a wealth of material, which has to be compared with the account given by the Armenian historian Sebeos and the Arabic sources. No doubt scholars have overestimated the reliability of Theophylactos, as Peeters has argued. For instance the account in IV.1–9, where he relates that after negotiations between Khusrau and Bahrām Chōbēn a battle was fought between them in which Khusrau was defeated, is erroneous, as is proved by the Anonymous Syriac Chronicle.[2] Peeters has pointed out that Theophylactos in this case was dependent on certain popular traditions, for there existed a novel with Bahrām as its hero.[3] However, these minor deficiencies cannot change the general opinion about the importance of this source, vastly undervalued by Peeters.[4]

[1] Peeters, *AB* LXV (1947), pp. 29–56.

[2] Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene Chronik*, pp. 5ff.

[3] Cf. A. Christensen, *Romanen om Bahrām Tschōbīn* (Copenhagen, 1907), pp. 9, 13, 50 ff., 99 with n. 12. Christensen, however, did not observe that Theophylactos has taken over elements of the novelistic traditions about Bahrām Chōbēn.

[4] Peeters, however, mitigates his judgement when he says (p. 56): "un érudit ne peut ni accepter telle qu'elle l'histoire de Théophylacte Simocattès, ni la rejeter en bloc."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The abbreviations used in the bibliographies and footnotes are listed below.

AA	*Archäologischer Anzeiger* (Beiblatt zum Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts) (Berlin)
AAWG	*Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Göttingen)
AAntASH	*Acta antiqua academiae scientiarum Hungaricae* (Budapest)
AArchASH	*Acta archaeologica academiae scientiarum Hungaricae* (Budapest)
AB	*Analecta Bollandiana* (Brussels)
Acta Iranica	Acta Iranica (encyclopédie permanente des études iraniennes) (Tehran–Liège–Leiden)
Aevum	*Aevum* (Rassegna di Scienze Storiche Linguistiche e Filologiche) (Milan)
AGWG	*Abhandlungen der (königlichen) Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* (Berlin)
AI	*Ars Islamica = Ars Orientalis* (Ann Arbor, Mich.)
AION	*Annali: Istituto Orientale di Napoli* (s.l. sezione linguistica; n.s. new series) (Naples)
AJSLL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* (Chicago)
AKM	*Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (Leipzig)
AMI	*Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* (old series 9 vols 1929–38; new series 1968–) (Berlin)
Anatolia	*Anatolia* (revue annuelle d'archéologie) (Ankara)
ANS	American Numismatic Society
ANSMN	*American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* (New York)
ANSNNM	American Numismatic Society Numismatic Notes and Monographs (New York)
ANSNS	American Numismatic Society Numismatic Studies (New York)
Antiquity	*Antiquity* (a periodical review of archaeology edited by Glyn Daniel) (Cambridge)
AO	*Acta Orientalia* (ediderunt Societates Orientales Batava Danica Norvegica Svedica) (Copenhagen)
AOAW	*Anzeiger der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Vienna)
AOH	*Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* (Budapest)
APAW	*Abhandlungen der Preussischen (Deutschen) Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Berlin)
Apollo	*Apollo* (The magazine of the arts) (London)
ArOr	*Archiv Orientální* (Quarterly Journal of African, Asian and Latin American Studies) (Prague)
Artibus Asiae	*Artibus Asiae* (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University) (Dresden, Ascona)

Asia Major	*Asia Major* (a journal devoted to the study of the languages, arts and civilizations of the Far East and Central Asia) old series, 11 vols (Leipzig, 1923–35); (a British journal of Far Eastern studies) new series, 19 vols (London, 1949–75)
ASIR	*Archaeological Survey of India.* Reports made during the years 1862– by Alexander Cunningham, 23 vols. Simla–Calcutta, 1871–87.
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (Baltimore, Maryland)
BCH	*Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* (Athens–Paris)
BCMA	*The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland, Ohio)
BEFEO	*Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient* (Hanoi-Paris)
Berytus	*Berytus* (archaeological studies published by the Museum of Archaeology and the American University of Beirut) (Copenhagen)
BMQ	*British Museum Quarterly* (London)
BSO(A)S	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies* (University of London)
Byzantion	*Byzantion* (Revue Internationale des Études Byzantines) (Brussels)
CAH	*The Cambridge Ancient History*, 12 vols; 1st edition 1924–39 (Cambridge) (Revised edition 1970–)
Caucasica	*Caucasica* (Zeitschrift für die Erforschung der Sprachen und Kulturen des Kaukasus und Armeniens) 10 fascs (Leipzig, 1924–34)
CII	*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* (Oxford)
CIIr	*Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* (London)
CRAI	*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres* (Paris)
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (Paris, Louvain)
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna)
DOAW	*Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Vienna)
East and West	*East and West* (Quarterly published by the Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Orient) (Rome)
EI	*Epigraphia Indica* (Calcutta)
Eos	*Eos* (Commentarii Societatis Philologae Polonorum) (Bratislava–Warsaw)
EPRO	Études préliminaries aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain (Leiden)
Eranos	*Eranos* (Acta Philologica Suecana) (Uppsala)
ERE	*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, 13 vols (Edinburgh, 1908–21)
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte (Leipzig, Berlin)
Georgica	*Georgica* (a journal of Georgian and Caucasian studies) nos. 1–5 (London, 1935–7)
GJ	*The Geographical Journal* (London)

Gnomon	*Gnomon* (Kritische Zeitschrift für die gesamte klassische Altertumswissenschaft) (Munich)
Hellenica	*Hellenica* (receuil d'épigraphie de numismatique et d'antiquités grecques) (Paris)
Historia	*Historia* (Journal of Ancient History) (Wiesbaden)
HJAS	*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (Cambridge, Mass.)
HO	*Handbuch der Orientalistik*, ed. B. Spuler (Leiden–Cologne)
HOS	*Harvard Oriental Series* (Cambridge, Mass.)
IA	*Iranica Antiqua* (Leiden)
IIJ	*Indo-Iranian Journal* (The Hague)
IndAnt	*The Indian Antiquary*, 62 vols (Bombay, 1872–1933)
Iran	*Iran* (journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies) (London–Tehran)
Iraq	*Iraq* (journal of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq) (London)
JA	*Journal Asiatique* (Paris)
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society* (New York)
JASB	*Journal (and proceedings) of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Calcutta)
JASBB	*Journal of the Asiatic Society Bombay Branch* (Bombay)
JCOI	*Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute*, 29 vols (Bombay, 1922–35)
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies* (New Haven, Conn.)
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (Leiden)
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies* (London)
JMBRAS	*Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Singapore)
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (Chicago)
JNSI	*Journal of the Numismatic Society of India* (Bombay)
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (London)
JRS	*The Journal of Roman Studies* (London)
Kairos	*Kairos* (Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft und Theologie) (Salzburg)
Klio	*Klio* (Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte) (Berlin)
Kuml	*Kuml* (Aarbog for Jysk Arkaeologisk Selskab) (Aarhus)
KSIIMK	*Kratkie soobshcheniya o dokladakh i polevykh issledovaniyakh Instituta istorii materialnoï kultury AN SSR* (Moscow)
KZ	*Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung, begründet von Adalbert Kuhn* (Göttingen)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MDAFA	Mémoires de la délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan (Paris)
Mesopotamia	*Mesopotamia* (Rivista di Archeologia, Faculta di Littere e filosofia) (University of Turin)
MMAB	*The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* (old series 1905–42; new series 1942–) (New York)

MMP — *Monuments et Mémoires* (publiés par l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres) (Fondation Eugène Piot, Paris)

Le Muséon — *Le Muséon* (Revue d'Études Orientales) (Louvain-Paris)

Museum — *Museum* (art magazine edited by the Tokyo National Museum) (Tokyo)

NC — *Numismatic Chronicle* (London)

NGWG — *Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* (Göttingen)

Numismatica — *Numismatica* (Rome)

OLZ — *Orientalische Literaturzeitung* (Berlin–Leipzig)

Oriens — *Oriens* (journal of the International Society for Oriental Research) (Leiden)

Orientalia — *Orientalia* (a quarterly published by the Faculty of Ancient Oriental Studies, Pontifical Biblical Institute) new series (Rome)

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PBA — *Proceedings of the British Academy* (London)

Philologus — *Philologus* (Zeitschrift für das klassische Altertum) (Stolberg, etc., now Berlin)

PO — *Patrologia Orientalis* (ed. R. Gaffin and F. Nau) (Paris)

RAA — *Revue des arts asiatiques* (Paris)

RAC — *Reallexicon fur Antike und Christentum* (ed. T. Klauser) (Stuttgart, 1950–)

REA — *Revue des études arméniennes*, nouvelle séric (Paris)

Religion — *Religion* (A Journal of Religion and Religions) (Newcastle upon Tyne)

RGG — *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., 6 vols (Tübingen, 1927–32); 3rd ed., 7 vols (Tübingen, 1957–65)

RHR — *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* (Paris)

RIN — *Rivista Italiana di Numismatica e Scienzi Affini* (Milan)

RN — *Revue Numismatique* (Paris)

RSO — *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* (Rome)

Saeculum — *Saeculum* (Jahrbuch fur Universalgeschichte) (Freiburg–Munich)

SBE — Sacred Books of the East (Oxford)

SCBO — Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis (Oxford)

Semitica — *Semitica* (Cahiers publiés par l'Institut d'Études Sémitiques de l'Université de Paris) (Paris)

SHAW — *Sitzungsberichte der heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Heidelberg)

SPA — *A Survey of Persian Art*, ed. A. U. Pope and P. Ackerman, 6 vols (Text pp. 1–2817) (Oxford–London–New York, 1938–39); repr. 12 vols (Tokyo, 1964–65); no vol. xiii; vol. xiv *New Studies 1938–1960* (Text pp. 2879–3205) (Oxford–London, 1967); vol. xv *Bibliography of Pre-Islamic Persian Art to 1938* (cols 1–340), Reprint of *Index to Text Volumes I–III* (*i–vi*)

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SPAW *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen (Deutschen) Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Berlin)

StIr *Studia Iranica* (Leiden)

Sumer *Sumer* (journal of archaeology and history in Iraq) (Baghdad)

SWAW *Sitzungsberichte der Wiener (Österreichischen) Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Phil. Hist. Klasse) (Vienna)

Syria *Syria* (Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie) (Paris)

TITAKE *Trudi Iuzhno-Turkmenistanskoi Archeologischeskoi Kimplexnoi Ekspeditsii*, 6 vols (Moscow, 1949–58)

TM *Travaux et mémoires* (Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilization de Byzance) (Paris)

T'oung Pao *T'oung Pao* (Archives concernant l'histoire, les langues, la géographie, l'ethnographie et les arts de l'Asie orientale) (Leiden)

TPS *Transactions of the Philological Society* (London)

VDI *Vestnik drevneĭ istorii* (Moscow)

WVDOG *Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* (Leipzig)

WZKM *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (Vienna)

YCS *Yale Classical Studies* (New Haven, Conn.)

ZA *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* (Berlin)

ZDMG *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (Wiesbaden)

ZN *Zeitschrift für Numismatik* (Berlin)

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CHAPTER I

1. *Sources*

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CHAPTER 2

(a) *Classical authorities*

Note. A full bibliography of Classical notices on Parthia is liable to be cumbersome, since the brief references are scattered through the pages of longer works primarily concerned with other topics. Only the principal authorities are listed here. A selection of more detailed references will be found in the footnotes. Most of these texts are printed in numerous editions.

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*Wroth, *BMC Parthia*.

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CHAPTER 4

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of sources on Sassanian Iran, for which consult *Christensen, *L'Iran*, pp. 50–83.[1] Rather, it is first an overall guide to bibliographies on specific subjects, and second a chronological survey of the most important sources for the political history of Sassanian Iran.

All Sassanian inscriptions will be contained in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* published in London and now in progress. A preliminary glossary has been prepared by P. Gignoux, *Glossaire des inscriptions pehlevies et parthes*, London, 1972 (*CIIr* Supplementary Series 1). The two basic works on the great inscription of Shāpūr are M. Sprengling, *Third Century Iran. Sapor and Kartir* (Chicago, 1953) and *Maricq, "Res Gestae". For other inscriptions the main publication is E. Herzfeld, *Paikuli* (Berlin, 1924).

Sassanian numismatics are conveniently summarized by R. Göbl, *Sassanian Numismatics* (Brunswick, 1971) where an extensive bibliography on the subject may be found.

Seals and clay sealings may be found in the relevant volumes of the *CIIr*. Bibliographical references to the inscriptions on them, and on all Iranian inscriptions from the Sassanian period, may be found in *Henning, "Mitteliranisch".

Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature is surveyed by J. Tavadia, *Die mittelpersische Sprache und Literatur der Zarathustrier* (Leipzig, 1956) p. 141. In this book the bibliographies of editions, and studies on each of them, will aid the reader.

Arabic and Persian sources on the Sassanians are discussed by Christensen, *op. cit*, pp. 59–74, and a full bibliography is in B. Spuler, *Iran in frühislamischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 1952) pp. 535–64.

Nothing has replaced the remarks of Christensen *op. cit.* on Greek and Latin sources (pp. 73–7), Armenian sources (pp. 77–9) and Syriac sources (pp. 80–3).

The overall history of the succession of Sassanian rulers is covered by Ṭabarī (see especially *Nöldeke, *Tabari*) and by *Firdausī. Although other works, such as the Arabic text of al-Tha'ālibī, edited and translated into French by H. Zotenberg, *Histoire des rois des Perses* (Paris, 1900), contain information not found in Ṭabarī or Firdausī, those two are the most important general histories upon which many others are based. Firdausī, of course, contains many fanciful stories, but cannot be ignored if used with caution.

For the beginning of the Sassanian dynasty, we have a plethora of material. The most important Classical source is Agathias, edited in a recent publication by R. Keydell (Berlin, 1967). All sources are surveyed in G. Walser and T. Pékary, *Die Krise des römischen Reiches* (Berlin, 1962). A summary of events, with selected translations from various sources is given in J. Gagé, *La montée des Sassanides* (Paris, 1964).

After the death of Shāpūr I, there follows a dearth of information until

[1] See also pp. 359ff. and 1269ff. in the present volume.

the time of Shāpūr II. For his reign we have the long account of his wars with the Romans by Ammianus Marcellinus, edited and trans. into English by J. C. Rolfe (LCL, London, 1935).

In the 4th century, for the first time, we have the Syriac acts of the Persian martyrs which, in addition to religious matters, contain items of information significant for political history. G. Wiesner has studied these accounts in his *Zur Märtyrerüberlieferung aus der Christenverfolgung Schapurs II*, *AAWG* LXVII (1967). The Syriac chronicles, while occasionally having items of interest to Iran, are generally disappointing as sources for the political history of Iran under the Sassanians.

In the reign of Yazdagird I and throughout the 5th century the Armenian sources begin to throw light on Sassanian history, and they give us information in addition to the standard texts of Ṭabarī and Firdausī. For the early part of the century the chronicles of Lazar of P'arp and of Ełišē, although concerned with the history of Armenia, are also of value for Iranian history. Translated into French under the auspices of V. Langlois, *Collection des historiens anciens et modernes de l'Arménie* II (Paris, 1869), pp. 183–368, both translations need to be controlled by the newer and best editions of each: Lazar, *Patmut'iun Hayoc*, ed. Ter-Mkrtzean (Tiflis, 1904), and Ełišē, *Vasn Vardanac ew Hayoc Paterazmin*, ed. E. Ter-Minasean (Erevan, 1957). Priscus, ed. L. Dindorff, *Historici Graeci Minores* I (Leipzig, 1870), pp. 275–352, or ed. C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum* IV (Paris, 1868) pp. 29–110, has interesting information about the reign of Pērōz.

For the end of the 5th century and the beginning of the 6th, especially the reigns of Kavād and the beginning of Khusrau I we have detailed account of the wars between Persians and Byzantines in Procopius; *History of the Wars*, ed. and tr. H. B. Dewing (LCL, London, 1961). Agathias, mentioned above, is also an important source for the reign of Khusrau I.

The Mazdakite movement has evoked two books, one by A. Christensen, *Le régne du roi Kawādh I et le communisme Mazdakite* (Copenhagen, 1925) and O. Klima, *Mazdak* (Prague, 1957). The Syriac chronicle of Joshua the Stylite, ed. and tr. W. Wright (Cambridge, 1882) is especially useful for Kavād's reign, although many Byzantine authors writing in Greek are just as important for the events of the 6th and 7th centuries.[1] The Corpus Scriptorum Historicorum Byzantinorum, published in the first half of the 19th century at Bonn, contains the texts of relevant authors.

For the last century of Sassanian rule we have a number of valuable chronicles such as the so-called Syriac "Anonymous of Guidi", first edited by I. Guidi in the CSCO series 3, vol. IV, and translated by T. Nöldeke in *SWAW* CXXVIII (1893), no. IX. For a detailed bibliography of this period see P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam* I (Paris, 1951), pp. 332ff.

For the 7th century the massive number of Arabic sources completely changes our view of the history of Iran, bringing it from the shadows into the full light of detailed chronicles. The *Futūḥ al-buldān* of al-Balādhurī, ed. M. J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1866) and translated into English by P. K. Hitti,

[1] See also bibliography to Ch. 27 (*b*).

The Origins of the Islamic State, part I (New York, 1916), part 2 by F. Murgotten (New York, 1924) is perhaps the most valuable source on the Arab conquests. For the Islamic sources see Spüler, *op. cit.*

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CHAPTER 21

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CHAPTER 32(*a*)

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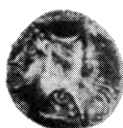


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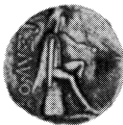








4 5 6 7




8


49. Bactrian, Seleucid and Parthian coins.
(1) Silver tetradrachm of Demetrius of Bactria;
(2) silver tetradrachm of Antimachus of Bactria;
(3) silver tetradrachm of Eucratides of Bactria;
(4) silver drachm of the Seleucid ruler Demetrius I of Syria;
(5) silver drachm of Mithridates I of Parthia;
(6) silver drachm of Mithridates I of Parthia;
(7) silver drachm of Mithridates II of Parthia;
(8) silver drachm of Artabanus V of Parthia.




1 2








3 4 5









6 7 8





50 Indo-Scythian, Indo-Parthian and Kushān coins.
(1) Bronze coin of the Indo-Scythian ruler Maues;
(2) bronze coin of the Indo-Scythian ruler Maues;
(3) silver tetradrachm of the Indo-Scythian ruler Azes;
(4) silver tetradrachm of the Indo-Scythian ruler Azilises;
(5) bronze coin of the Indo-Parthian ruler Gondophares;
(6) bronze coin with the image and name of the last Bactrian king, Hermaios on the obverse and the name of the Kushān ruler Kujula Kadphises on the reverse;
(7) bronze coin of the Kushān ruler Kanishka with Greek inscriptions;
(8) gold stater of the Kushān ruler Kanishka with an inscription in Greek characters naming the god MOZΔOOANO.

(a)



(b)

51 Ikaros-Failaka (Persian Gulf):
(a) view of the Seleucid temple;
(b) column of the Seleucid temple.

(*a*)



(*b*)



52 Ai Khanum (*a*) view of the excavations in 1966, (*b*) entry into the "agora".



(*a*)

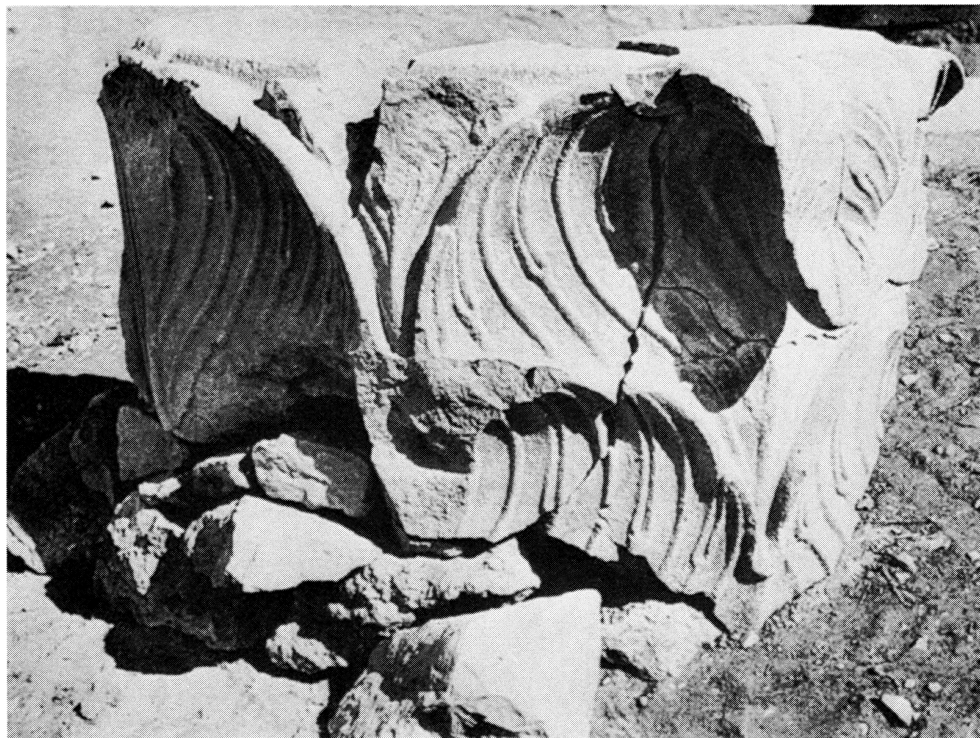


(*b*)



(*c*)

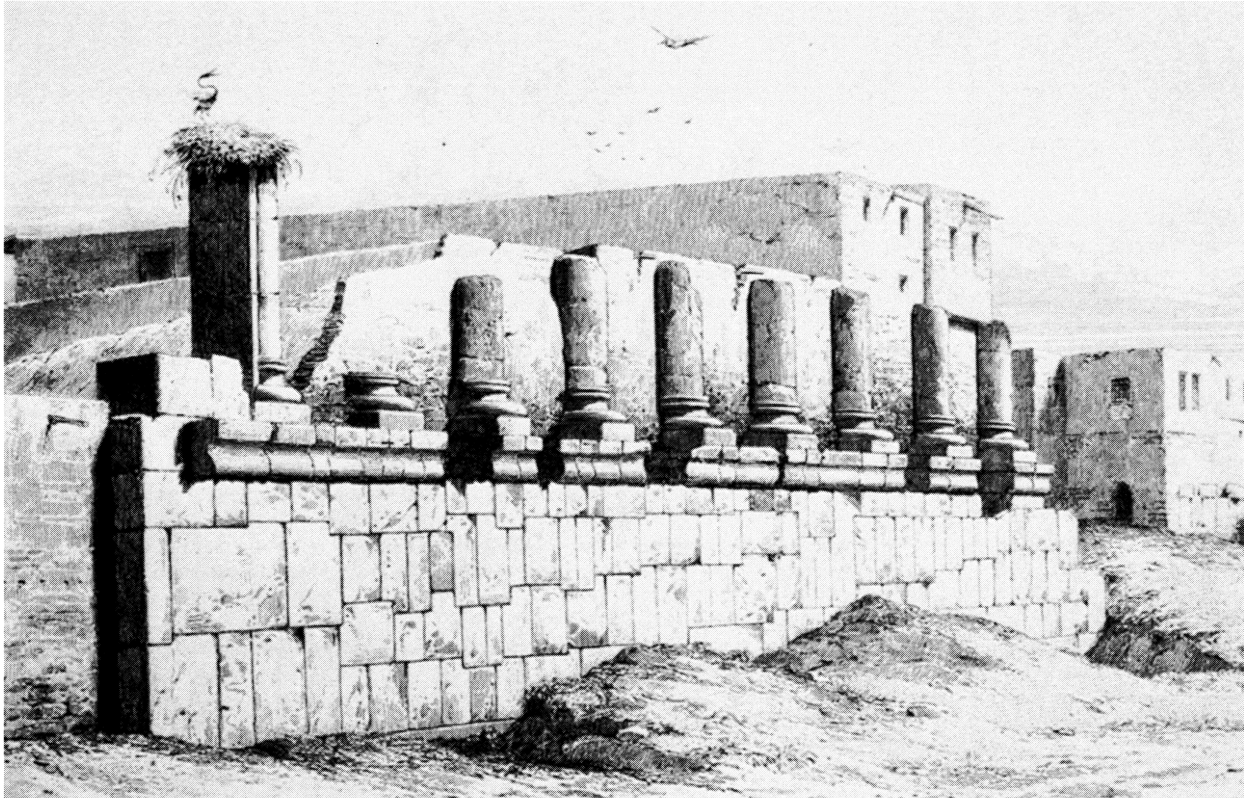
53 Ai Khanum:
(*a*) hypostyle hall; plaster base and mud-brick walls.
(*b*) Corinthian capital from the propylaeum.
(*c*) base of column from the propylaeum.



54 Istakhr, acanthus-leaved capital.



55 Khurkha, columns of the temple.



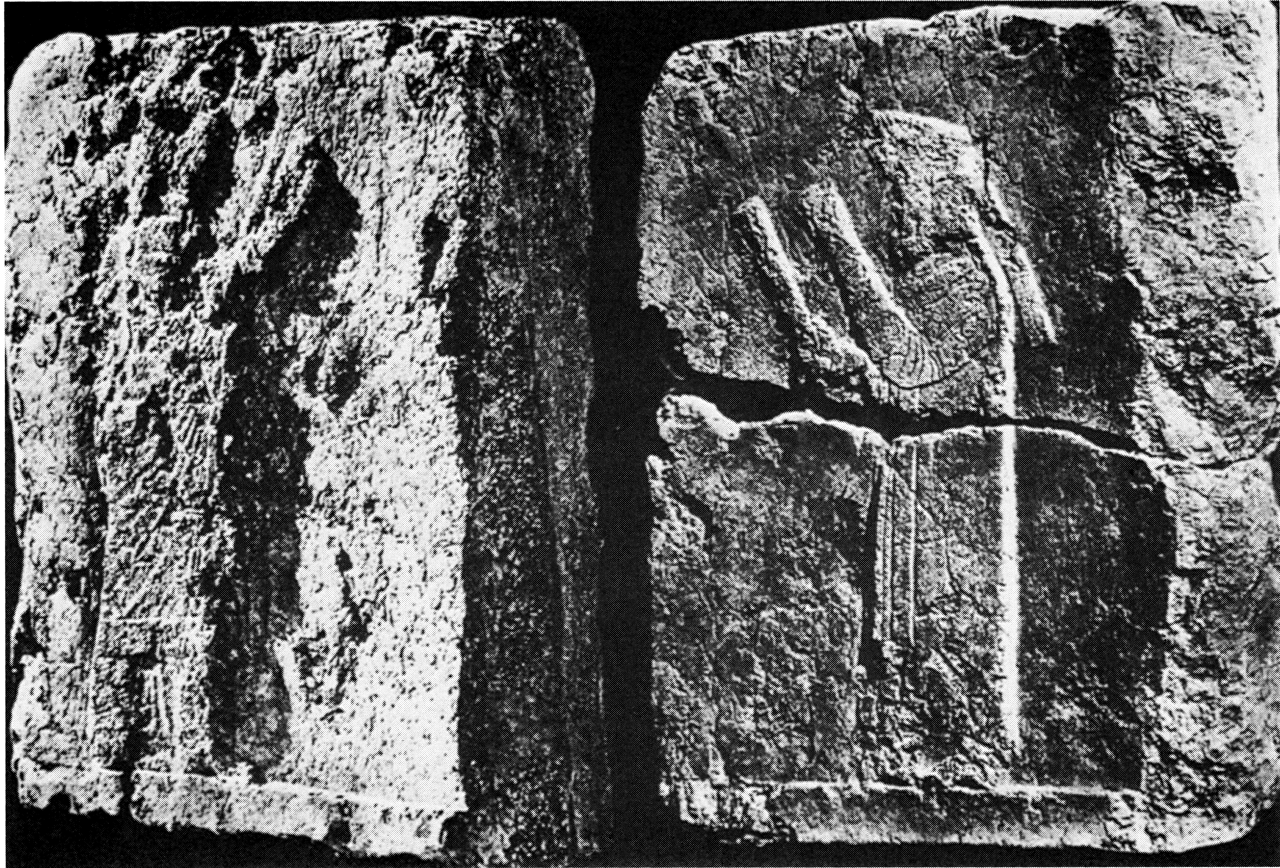
56 Kangāvar, ruins of the temple.



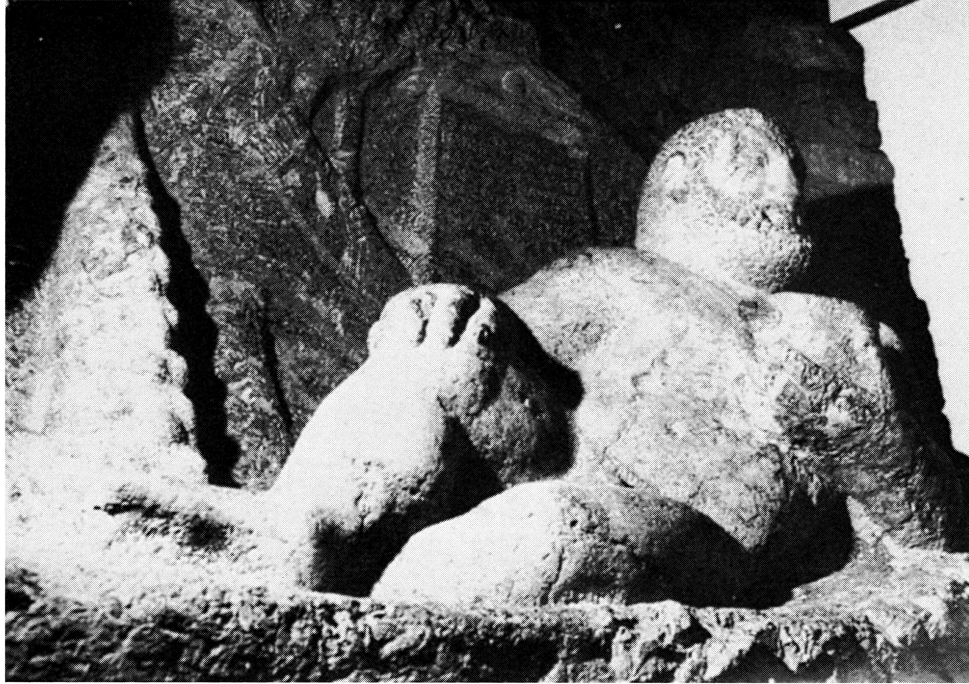
57 Tall-i Zohak, small marble head.



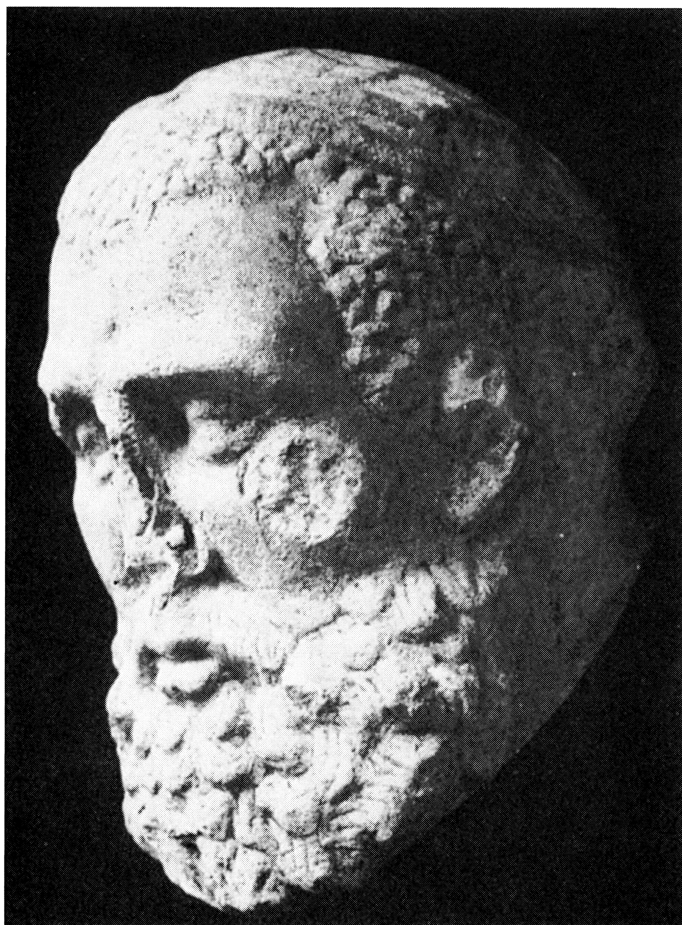
58 Bakhtiyari mountains, marble torso of a woman.



59 Persepolis, figures on door-jambs of the fire-temple.



60 Bīsitūn, reclining Herakles Kallinikos, rock sculpture.



61 Ai Khanum, head of a herm of Hellenistic style.



62 Nihāvand, bronze figurine of Zeus.



63 Nisā, ivory rhyton.



64 Bīsitūn, man sacrificing at an altar.



65 Susa, marble head of a Parthian queen.



66 Susa, limestone head of a bearded man.



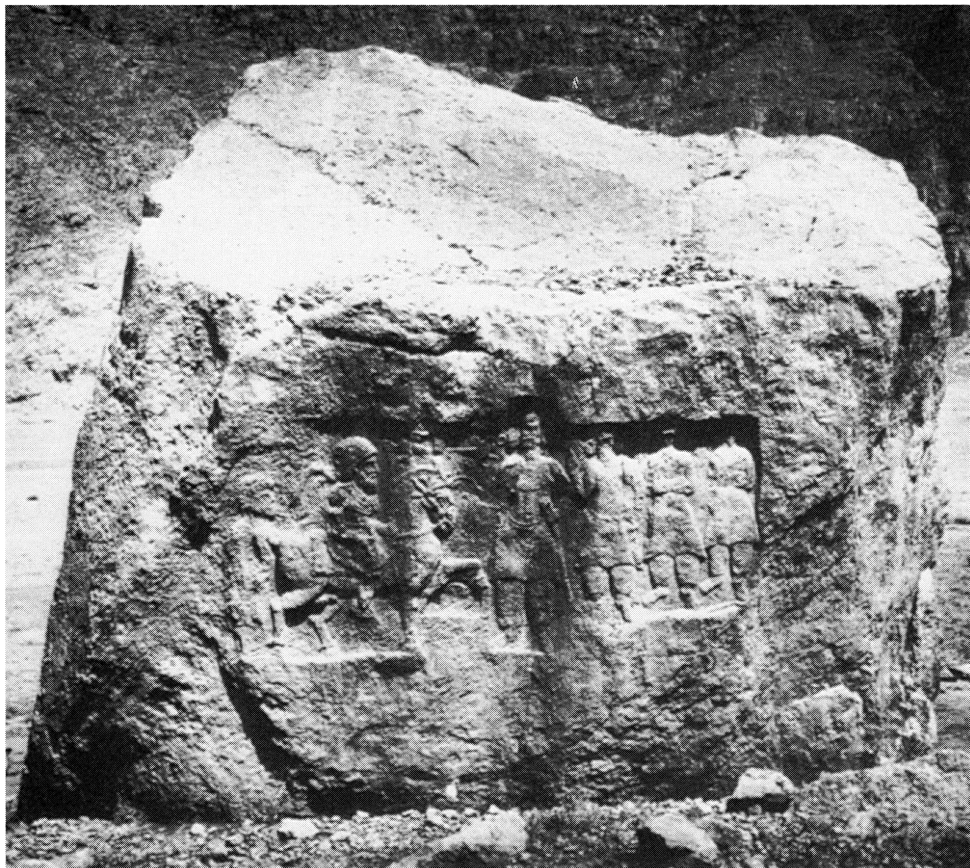
67 Susa, Artabanus V handing the ring to Khwasak, satrap of Susa.



68 Bard-i Nishānda, sculptured block showing a Parthian ruler with dignitaries.



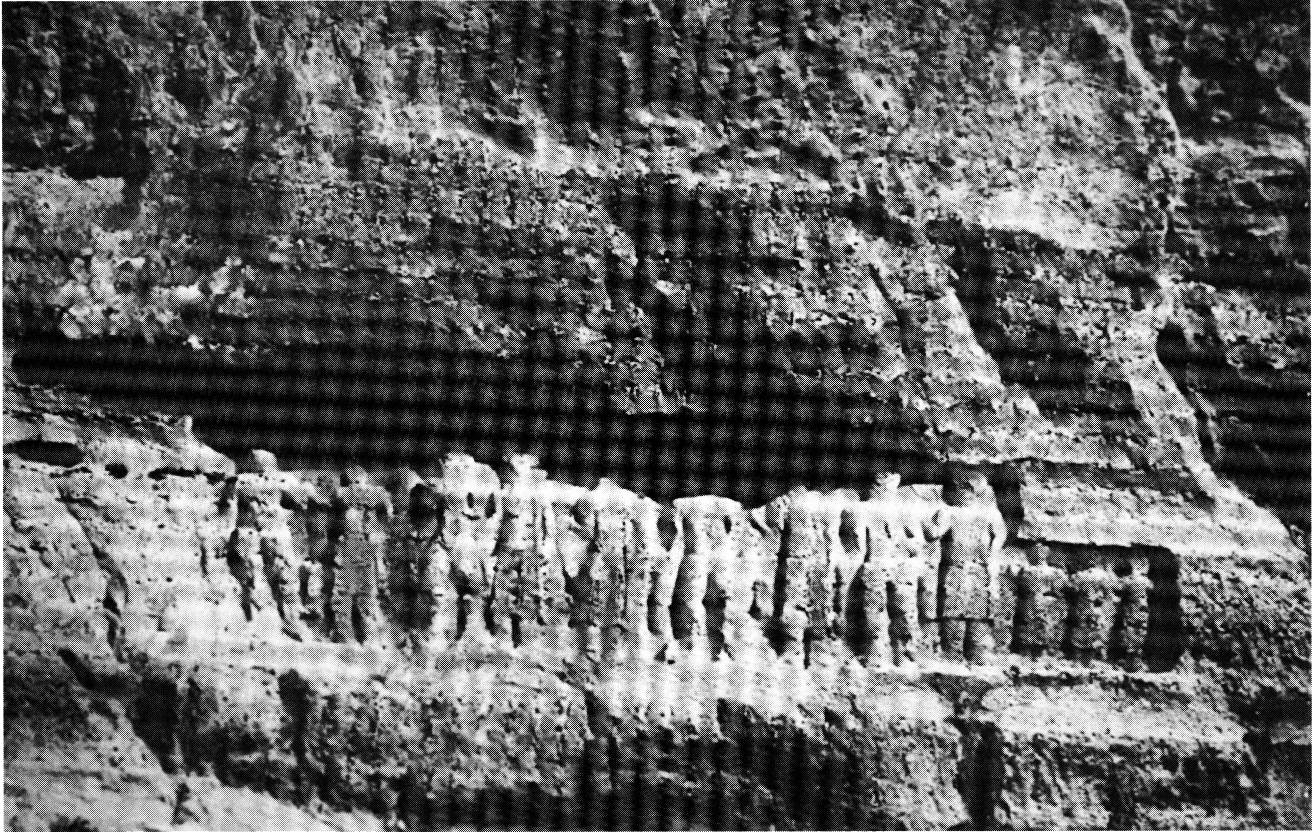
69 Shāmī, bronze statue of a Parthian prince.



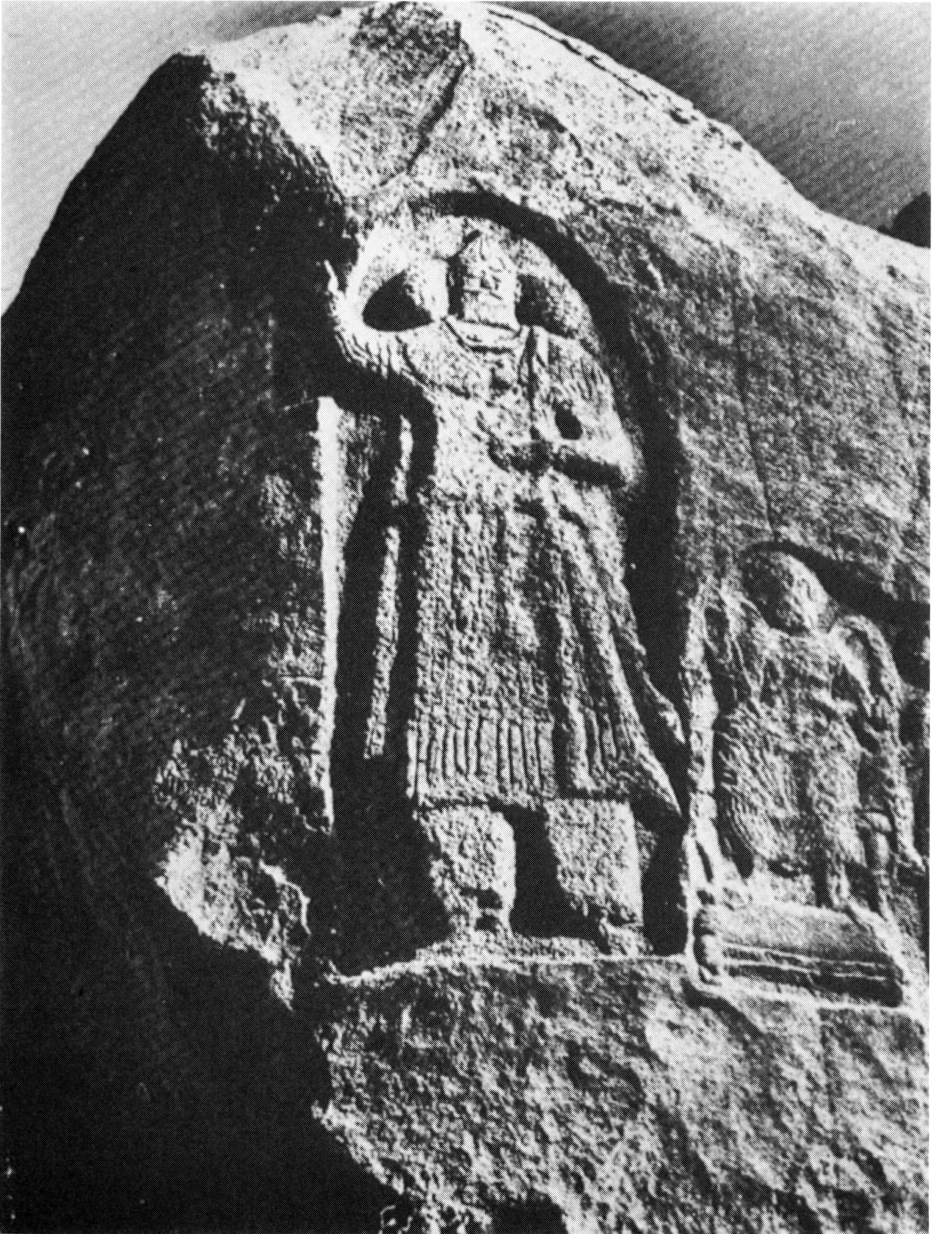
70 Khung-i Naurūzī, Parthian rock-relief.



71 Khung-i Kamālvand, Parthian rock-relief.



72 Shimbar, Parthian rock-relief.



73 Tang-i Sarvak, Parthian rock-relief.

(a)



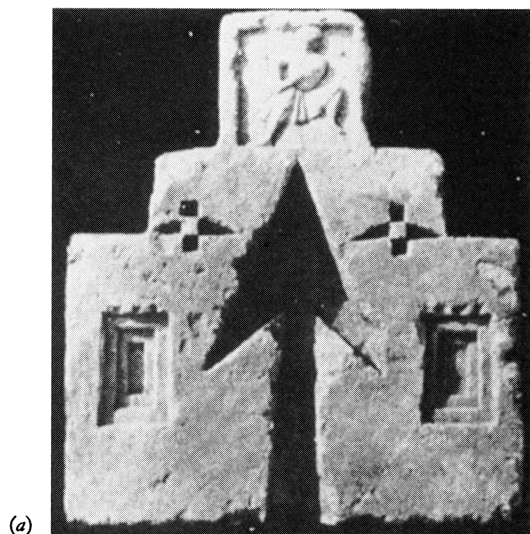
(b)



74 (*a*) and (*b*) Tang-i Sarvak, Parthian rock-reliefs.



75 Khalchayan, clay head of a man.


(*a*)


(*b*)

76 Surkh Kotal (*a*) stepped merlon, (*b*) fragment of a draped figure in clay.



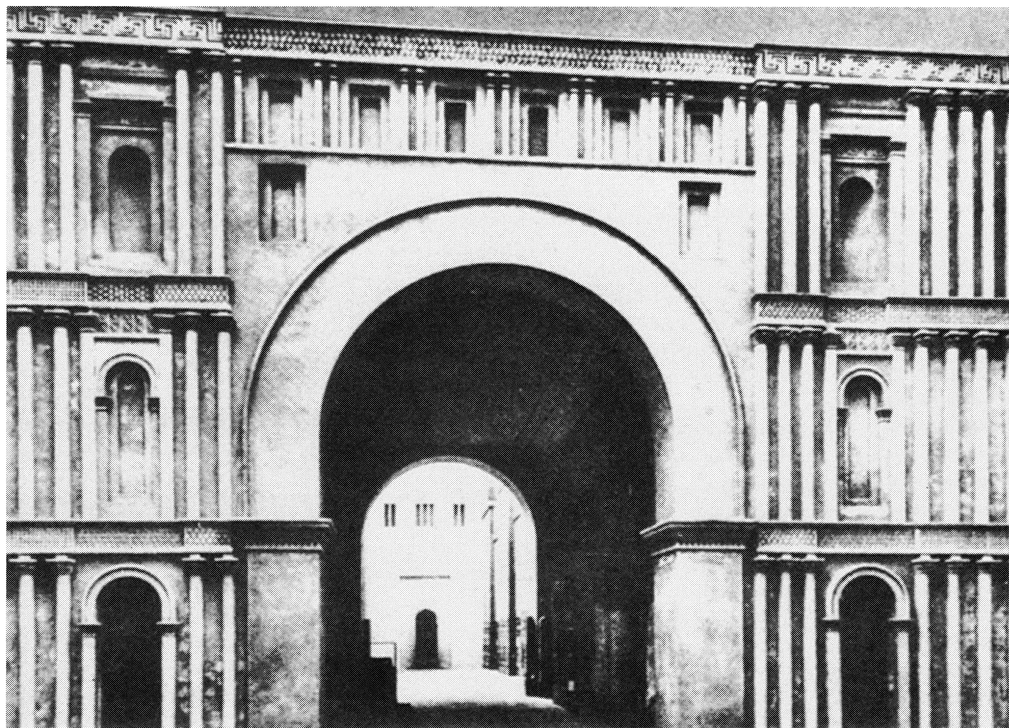

77 Surkh Kotal, statue of a prince or god in Kushān dress.



78 Kūh-i Khwāja, mural paintings of gods in copies by E. Herzfeld.



79 Mathura, statue of the Kushān ruler Kanishka.



80 Assur, reconstruction of a facade of the Parthian palace.

(*a*)



(*b*)



105 (*a*) Rock crystal bowl.
(*b*) Carnelian seal-stone, 4 cm. × 4·3 cm.


(a)


(b)


(c)

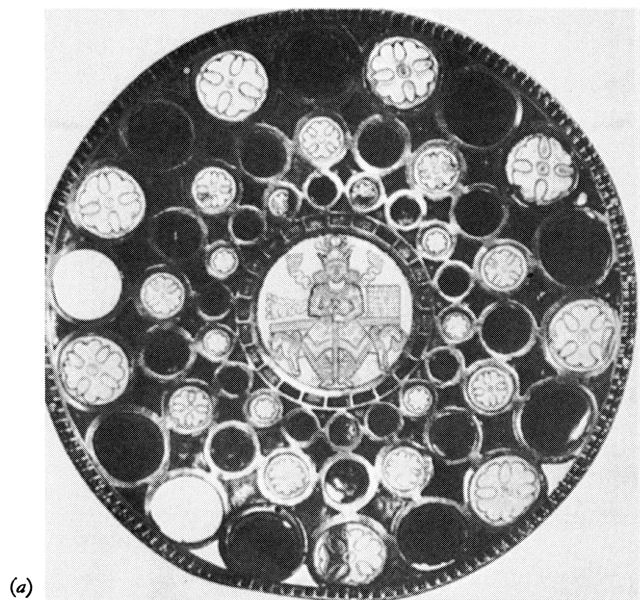

(d)

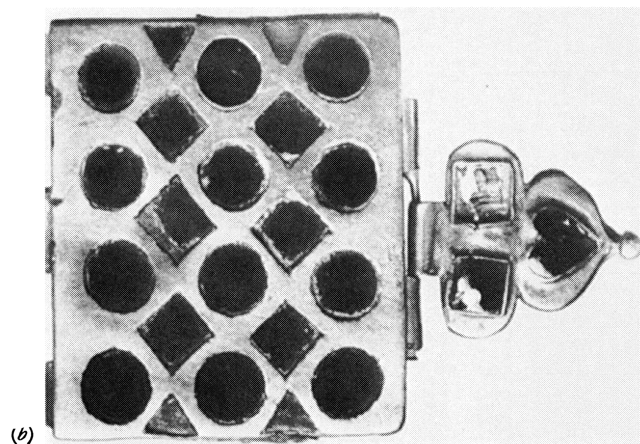

(e)

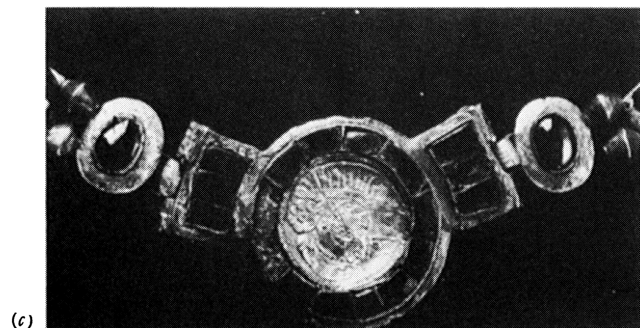

(f)

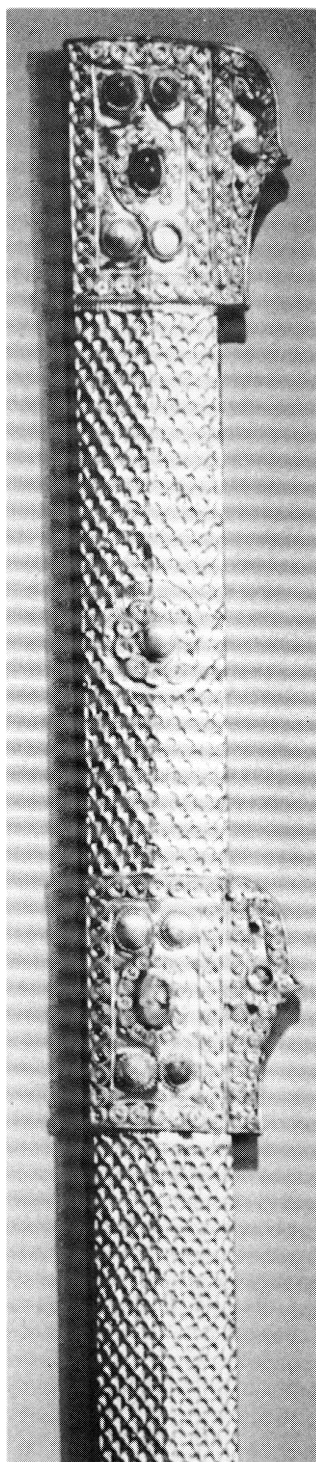

(g)

106 (a)–(g) Seal impressions.

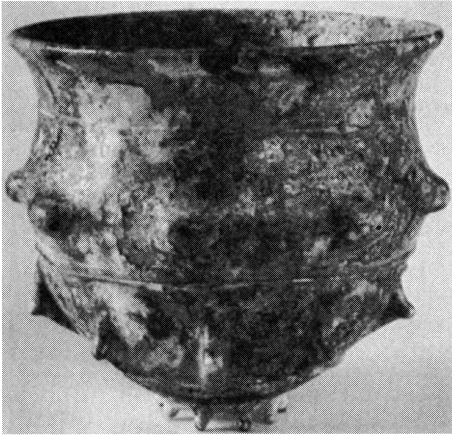

(*a*)


(*b*)


(*c*)


(*d*)

107 (*a*) The "cup of Khusrau". (*b*) Gold clasp. (*c*) Gold necklace. (*d*) Gold sword.



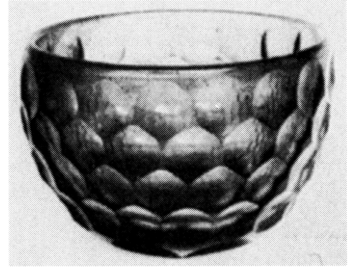
(*a*)



(*b*)



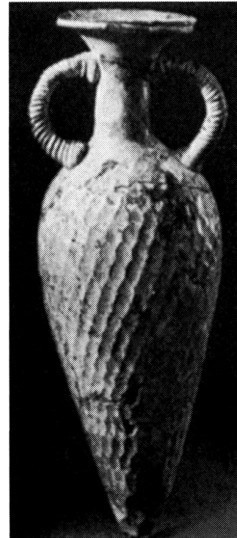
(*c*)



(*d*)



(*e*)



(*f*)

108 (*a*) Glass bowl. (*b*) Glass bottle.
(*c*) Glass bowl. (*d*) Glass bowl.
(*e*) Glass bowl. (*f*) Glass amphora-rhyton.

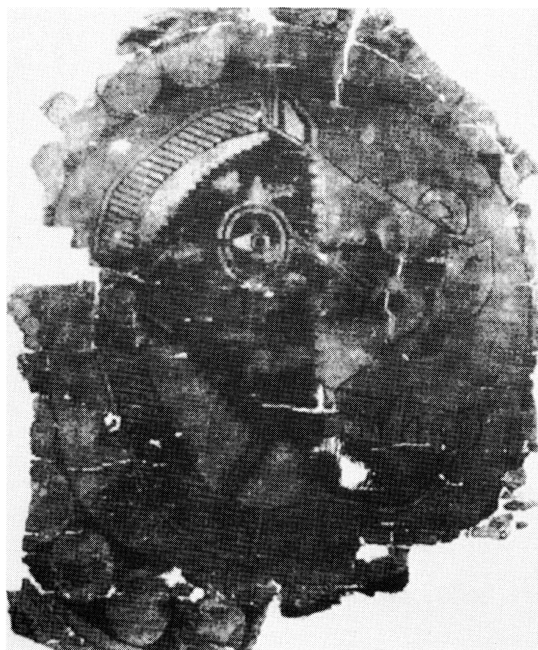

(*a*)


(*b*)


(*c*)

109 (*a*) Glazed jar. (*b*) Glazed rhyton. (*c*) Unglazed jar.

(a)



(b)



(c)

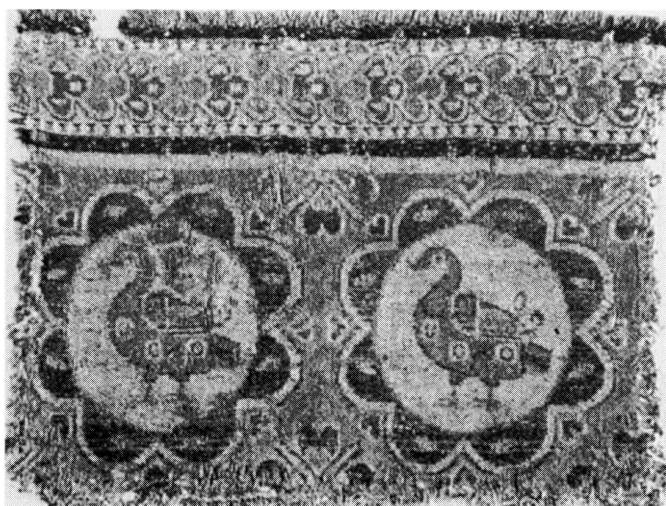
110 (*a*) Fresco painting from Afrāsiyāb.
(*b*) Fragment of silk from Astāna, Central Asia.
(*c*) Fragment of silk from Antinoë, Egypt.



(*a*)



(*c*)



(*b*)

111 (*a*) Fragment of duck silk, Aachen Cathedral treasure.
(*b*) Fragment of duck silk found in Egypt.
(*c*) Ṭaq-i Bustān, detail.

(*a*)

(*b*)



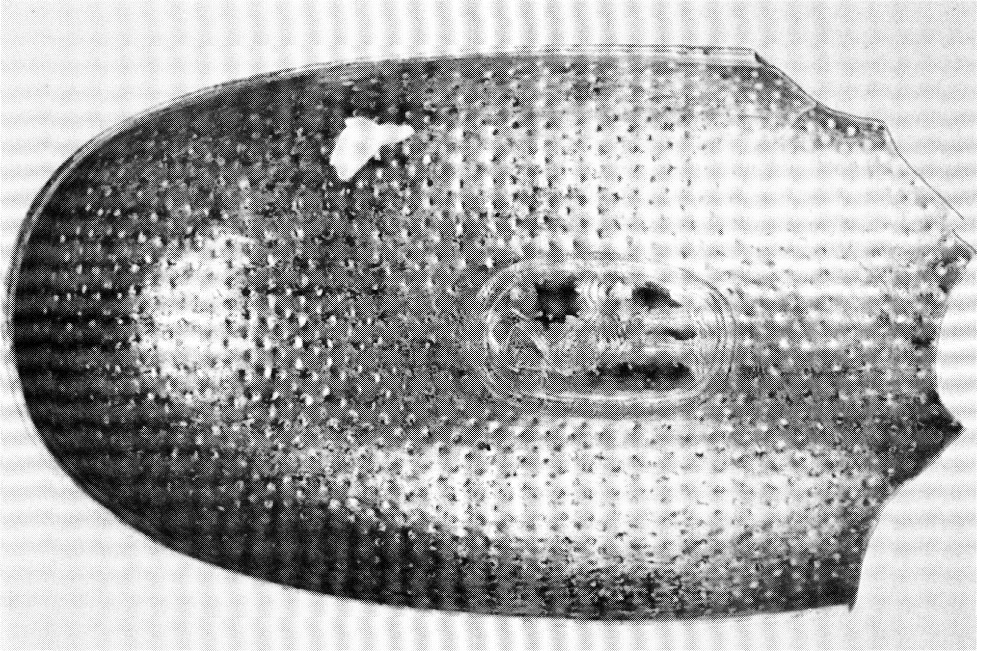
112 (*a*) Fragment of boar's head tapestry.
(*b*) Fragment of ibex tapestry.



113 Group of silver-gilt vessels. (*a*) Plate with twins, *c*. 500 A.D., diam. 21·4 cm., (*b*) vase, 6th century A.D., h. 17·3 cm., (*c*) ewer, 6th century A.D., h. 34·2 cm., (*d*) plate with Yazdgard I slaying a stag, late 4th or early 5th century A.D., diam. 23 cm., see also pl 117 (*e*) oval bowl with inhabited vine-scroll, 6th century A.D., 23·3 cm.



114 Silver bowl with medallions enclosing female busts, 4th century A.D., diam. 24·5 cm.



(*a*)



(*b*)

115 (*a*) Fragmentary silver oval bowl, Susa, *c.* 6th century A.D., l. 19·4 cm.
(*b*) Circular silver fluted bowl with a high foot, Susa, *c.* 6th century A.D., diam. 15·3 cm.



116 Silver-gilt plate with Bahrām hunting bears, 3rd century A.D., diam. 28·5 cm.



117 Silver-gilt plate with Yazdgard I spearing a stag, late 4th or early 5th century A.D., diam. 23 cm.



118 Silver-gilt plate with Kavād or Khusrau enthroned, 6th century A.D., diam. 26 cm.



119 Silver-gilt vase with female figures, 5th-6th centuries A.D., h. 18·4 cm.



120 Silver-gilt plate with Shāpūr II stabbing a red deer, 4th century A.D., diam. 18 cm.



121 Khwarazmian terra-cotta ossuary sculpture from the vicinity of Koĭ-krylgan-kala. Life-size. Probably 1st century A.D.



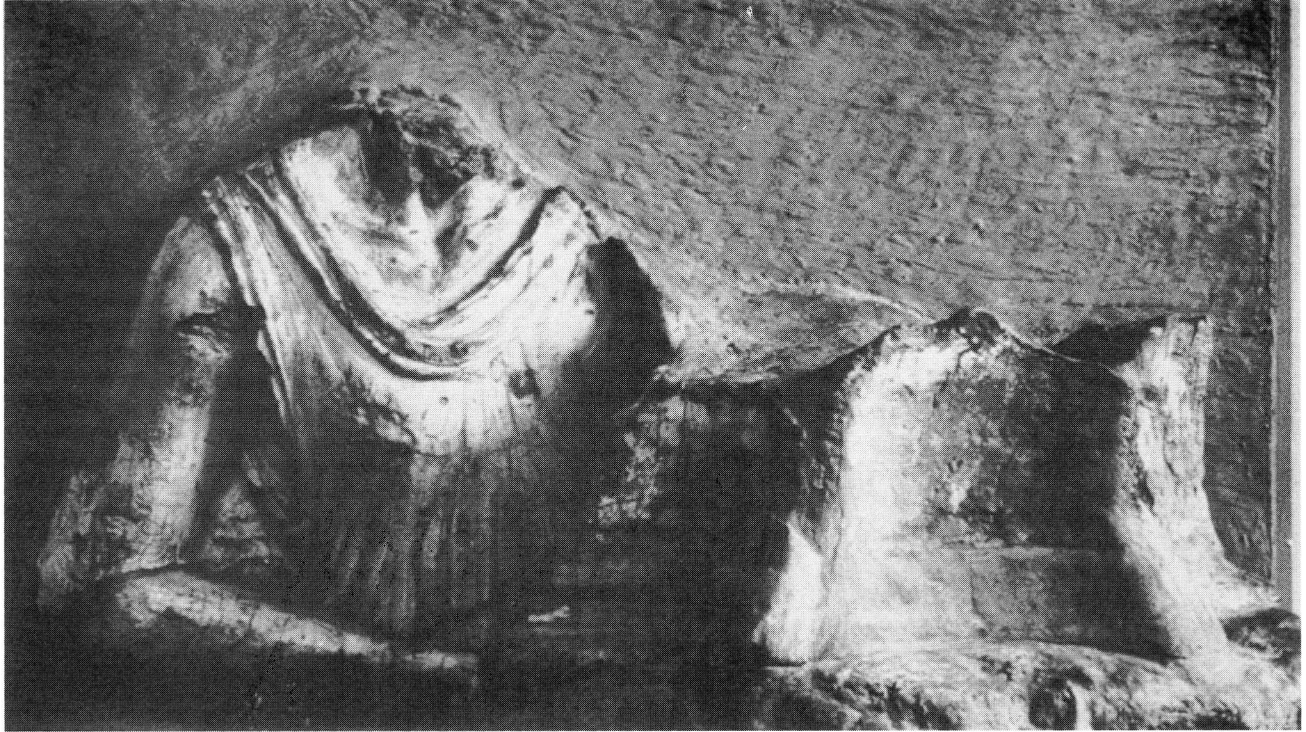
122 Toprak-kala, palace. Khwarazmian wall-painting of standing female figure, *c.* 3rd century A.D.



123 Toprak-kala, "Hall of Kings". Khwarazmian painted-stucco sculpture, *c.* 3rd century A.D. Slightly over life-size.



124 Toprak-kala, "Hall of Kings". Khwarazmian painted-stucco head of a ruler, *c*. 3rd century A.D. Slightly over life-size.



125 Panjikent, Sogdian stucco sculpture from a frieze on the façade of temple II, *c*. 6th century A.D.



126 Khwarazmian silver tetradrachm from Toprak-kala, showing the right profile of a local ruler with an eagle-topped crown. Diam c. 2·5 cm.



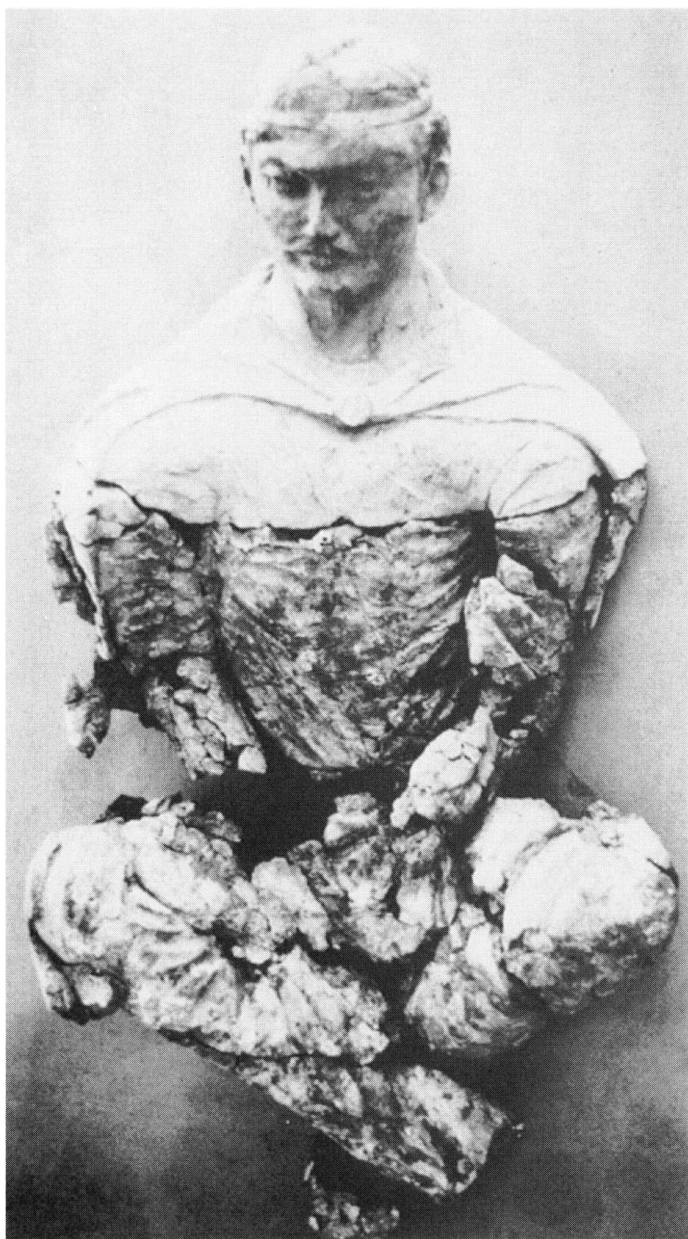
127 Afrāsiyāb, Samarqand, Sogdian terra-cotta ossuary figure, *c.* 6th century A.D. Height of head 25 cm.



128 Obverse of late Khwarazmian silver coin, showing right profile of a ruler, 7th or 8th century A.D., diam. *c.* 2·8 cm.



129 Afrāsiyāb, fragments of Sogdian terra-cotta female figures showing a goddess (?) with a mirror, *c.* 2nd–3rd centuries A.D.



130 North-Bactrian clay sculpture from a palace of the early Kushān period at Khalchayan, South Uzbekistan.



131 Khalchayan, north-Bactrian painted-clay head.



132 Khalchayan, north-Bactrian painted-clay head of a near-life-size figure.



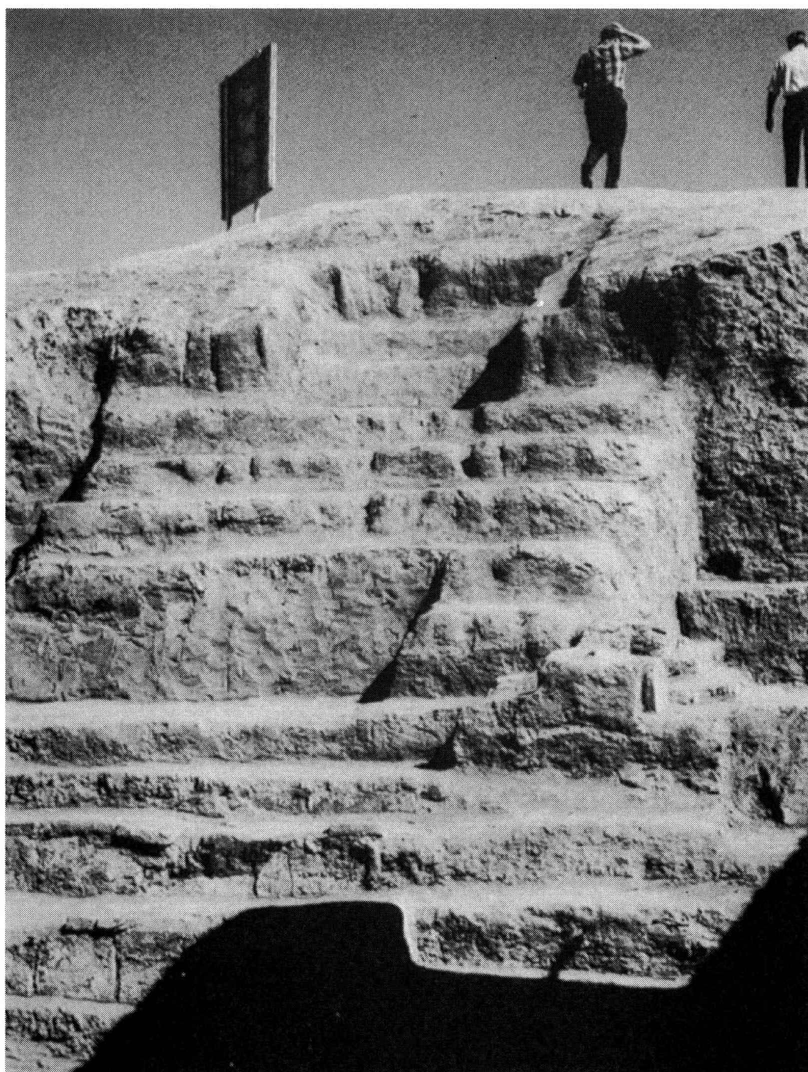
133 Khalchayan, north-Bactrian painted-clay "putto".



134 North-Bactrian painted-plaster head from the vicinity of a Buddhist sanctuary at Dalverzin-tepe, South Uzbekistan. Possibly 2nd or 3rd century A.D. 62 × 28 × 19 cm.



135 North-Bactrian mural from a 5th–6th century fort at Balalyk-tepe, Surkhan Darya region, South Uzbekistan.



136 Stairway of a stupa-base of clay blocks and brick, Ajina-tepe, Vakhsh valley, South Tajikistan, *c.* 7th–8th centuries A.D.



137 Terra-cotta head from the Buddhist monastery at Ajina-tepe.



138 Panjikent, Sogdian mural showing a detail from one of the episodes from the Rustam cycle.



139 Panjikent, Sogdian mural, detail showing two demoniac figures from an episode in the Rustam cycle.



140 Sogdian mural from the "Red Hall" at Varakhsha, Bukhārā oasis, showing a detail from a frieze of hunters and animals. Late 7th or early 8th century A.D.



141 Sogdian mural from Varakhsha, showing a detail from a hunting scene.



142 Afrāsiyāb, Sogdian mural showing the arrival of emissaries from Chaghāniyān and Hephtalite (?) lands at the Sogdian court at Samarqand, *c.* 7th or early 8th century A.D.



143 Sogdian mural showing a detail of the foreign mission at the Samarqand court. Detail of 142.



144 Afrāsiyāb, Sogdian mural showing detail of a bearded head.



145 Sogdian mural from Panjikent showing an episode from the Rustam cycle, 7th century A.D.



146 Sogdian mural from Panjikent showing an episode from the Rustam cycle, 7th century A.D.



147 Sogdian mural from Panjikent showing an episode from the Rustam cycle, 7th century A.D.



148 Sogdian mural from Panjikent showing an episode from the Rustam cycle, 7th century A.D.

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